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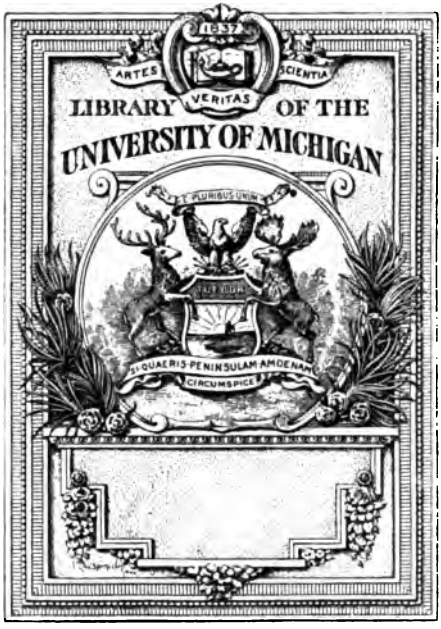
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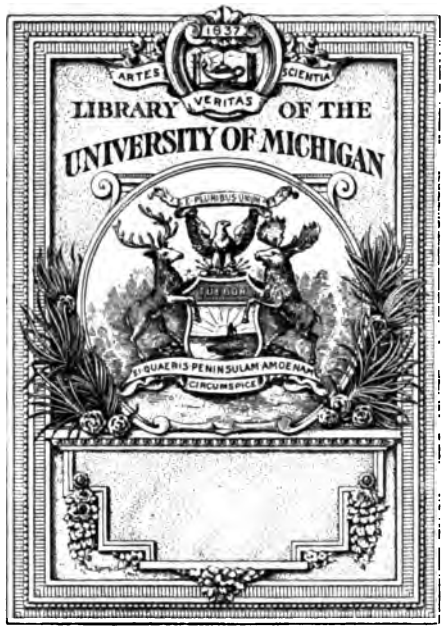
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THE WORKS OF

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DEAN OF ST. PATRICK'S, DUBLIN

CONTAINING

ADDITIONAL LETTERS, TRACTS, AND POEMS

NOT HITHERTO PUBLISHED

WITH NOTES AND A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Second Edition

IN NINETEEN VOLUMES

VOL. VIII.

LONDON
BICKERS & SON, LEICESTER SQUARE
1883

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SERMONS.

(CONTINUED.)

SERMON IX.

ON THE CAUSES OF

THE WRETCHED CONDITION OF IRELAND.*

PSALM CXLIV. 13, 14.

That there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is the people that is in such a case.

IT is a very melancholy reflection, that such a country as ours, which is capable of producing all things necessary, and most things convenient for life, sufficient for the support of four times the number of its inhabitants, should yet lie under the heaviest

* This is not very properly styled a sermon; but, considered as a political dissertation, it has great merit, and it is highly worthy of the subject, and the author. Most of the circumstances here founded upon, as the causes of national distress, are the subject of separate disquisitions in those political writings connected with Ireland. But they are here summed up, and brought into one view; and the opinions expressed form a sort of index to the Dean's tenets upon the state of that country.

load of misery and want; our streets crowded with beggars, so many of our lower sort of tradesmen, labourers, and artificers, not able to find clothes and food for their families.

I think it may therefore be of some use to lay before you the chief causes of this wretched condition we are in, and then it will be easier to assign what remedies are in our power, toward removing at least some part of these evils.

For, it is ever to be lamented, that we lie under many disadvantages, not by our own faults, which are peculiar to ourselves, and of which no other nation under heaven hath any reason to complain.

I shall, therefore, first mention some causes of our miseries, which I doubt are not to be remedied, until God shall put it into the hearts of those who are the stronger, to allow us the common rights and privileges of brethren, fellow-subjects, and even of mankind.

The first cause of our misery is, the intolerable hardships we lie under in every branch of trade, by which we are become as hewers of wood and drawers of water to our rigorous neighbours.

The second cause of our miserable state is, the folly, the vanity, and ingratitude, of those vast numbers, who think themselves too good to live in the country which gave them birth, and still gives them bread; and rather choose to pass their days, and consume their wealth, and draw out the very vitals of their mother kingdom, among those who heartily despise them.

These I have but lightly touched on, because I fear they are not to be redressed; and besides, I am very sensible how ready some people are to take offence at the honest truth; and for that reason, I shall omit several other grievances, under which we are long likely to groan.

I shall therefore go on to relate some other causes of this nation's poverty, by which, if they continue much longer, it must infallibly sink to utter ruin.

The first is, that monstrous pride and vanity in both sexes, especially the weaker sex, who, in the midst of poverty, are suffered to run into all kind of expense, and extravagance in dress; and particularly priding themselves to wear nothing but what cometh from abroad, disdaining the growth or manufacture of their own country, in those articles with which they can be better served at home at half the expense; and this is grown to such a height, that they will carry the whole yearly rent of a good estate at once on their body. And as there is in that sex a spirit of envy, by which they cannot endure to see others in a better habit than themselves, so those, whose fortunes can hardly support their families in the necessaries of life, will needs vie with the richest and greatest among us, to the ruin of themselves and their posterity.

Neither are the men less guilty of this pernicious folly, who, in imitation of a gaudiness and foppery of dress, introduced of late years into our neighbouring kingdom, (as fools are apt to imitate only the defects of their betters,) cannot find materials in their own country worthy to adorn their bodies of clay, while their minds are naked of every valuable quality.

Thus our tradesmen and shopkeepers, who deal in home goods are left in a starving condition, and only those encouraged who ruin the kingdom by importing among us foreign vanities.

Another cause of our low condition is, our great luxury; the chief support of which is, the materials of it brought to the nation in exchange for the few valuable things left us, whereby so many thousand families want the very necessaries of life.

Thirdly, In most parts of this kingdom the natives are, from their infancy, so given up to idleness and sloth, that they often choose to beg or steal, rather than support themselves with their own labour; they marry without the least view or thought of being able to make any provision for their families: and whereas, in all industrious nations, children are looked on as a help to their parents; with us, for want of being early trained to work, they are an intolerable burden at home, and a grievous charge upon the public: as appeareth from the vast number of ragged and naked children in town and country, led about by strolling women, trained up in ignorance, and all manner of vice.

Lastly, A great cause of this nation's misery is, that Egyptian bondage of cruel, oppressing, covetous landlords; expecting that all who live under them should make bricks without straw; who grieve and envy when they see a tenant of their own in a whole coat, or able to afford one comfortable meal in a month: by which the spirits of the people are broken, and made fit for slavery: the farmers and cottagers, almost through the whole kingdom, being, to all intents and purposes, as real beggars as any of those to whom we give our charity in the streets. And these cruel landlords are every day unpeopling the kingdom, by forbidding their miserable tenants to till the earth, against common reason and justice, and contrary to the practice and prudence of all other nations; by which numberless families have been forced either to leave the kingdom, or stroll about, and increase the number of our thieves and beggars.

Such, and much worse, is our condition at present, if I had leisure or liberty to lay it before you; and, therefore, the next thing which might be considered is, whether there may be any probable remedy found,

at least against some part of these evils; for most of them are wholly desperate.

But this being too large a subject to be now handled, and the intent of my discourse confining me to give some directions concerning the poor of the city, I shall keep myself within those limits. It is, indeed, in the power of the lawgivers to found a school in every parish of the kingdom, for teaching the meaner and poorer sort of children to speak and to read the English tongue, and to provide a reasonable maintenance for the teachers. This would, in time, abolish that part of barbarity and ignorance, for which our natives are so despised by all foreigners: this would bring them to think and act according to the rules of reason, by which a spirit of industry, and thrift, and honesty, would be introduced among them. And, indeed, considering how small a tax would suffice for such a work, it is a public scandal that such a thing should never have been endeavoured, or perhaps so much as thought on.

To supply the want of such a law, several pious persons, in many parts of this kingdom, have been prevailed on, by the great endeavours and good example set them by the clergy, to erect charity-schools in several parishes, to which very often the richest parishioners contribute the least. In those schools, children are, or ought to be, trained up to read and write, and cast accounts; and these children should, if possible, be of honest parents, gone to decay through age, sickness, or other unavoidable calamity, by the hand of God; not the brood of wicked strollers; for it is by no means reasonable that the charity of well-inclined people should be applied to encourage the lewdness of those profligate, abandoned women, who crowd our streets with their borrowed or spurious issue.

In those hospitals which have good foundations and rents to support them, whereof, to the scandal of Christianity, there are very few in this kingdom; I say, in such hospitals, the children maintained ought to be only of decayed citizens and freemen, and be bred up to good trades. But in these small parish charity-schools, which have no support but the casual goodwill of charitable people, I do altogether disapprove the custom of putting the children apprentice, except to the very meanest trades; otherwise the poor honest citizen, who is just able to bring up his child, and pay a small sum of money with him to a good master, is wholly defeated, and the bastard issue, perhaps of some beggar, preferred before him. And hence we come to be so overstocked with apprentices and journeymen, more than our discouraged country can employ; and, I fear, the greatest part of our thieves, pickpockets, and other vagabonds, are of this number.

Therefore, in order to make these parish charity-schools of great and universal use, I agree with the opinion of many wise persons, that a new turn should be given to this whole matter.

I think there is no complaint more just than what we find in almost every family, of the folly and ignorance, the fraud and knavery, the idleness and viciousness, the wasteful squandering temper of servants; who are, indeed, become one of the many public grievances of the kingdom; whereof, I believe, there are few masters that now hear me, who are not convinced by their own experience. And I am very confident, that more families, of all degrees, have been ruined by the corruption of servants, than by all other causes put together. Neither is this to be wondered at, when we consider from what nurseries so many of them are received into our houses. The first is the tribe of wicked boys,

wherewith most corners of this town are pestered, who haunt public doors. These, having been born of beggars, and bred to pilfer as soon as they can go or speak, as years come on, are employed in the lowest offices to get themselves bread, are practised in all manner of villainy, and when they are grown up, if they are not entertained in a gang of thieves, are forced to seek for a service. The other nursery is the barbarous and desert part of the country, from whence such lads come up hither to seek their fortunes, who are bred up from the dunghill in idleness, ignorance, lying, and thieving. From these two nurseries, I say, a great number of our servants come to us, sufficient to corrupt all the rest. Thus the whole race of servants in this kingdom have gotten so ill a reputation, that some persons from England, come over hither into great stations, are said to have absolutely refused admitting any servant born among us into their families. Neither can they be justly blamed: for, although it is not impossible to find an honest native fit for a good service, yet the inquiry is too troublesome, and the hazard too great, for a stranger to attempt.

If we consider the many misfortunes that befall private families, it will be found that servants are the causes and instruments of them all. Are our goods embezzled, wasted, and destroyed? is our house burnt to the ground? it is by the sloth, the drunkenness, or the villainy of servants. Are we robbed and murdered in our beds? it is by confederacy with our servants. Are we engaged in quarrels and misunderstandings with our neighbours? these were all begun and inflamed by the false, malicious tongues of our servants. Are the secrets of our families betrayed, and evil repute spread of us? our servants were the authors. Do false accusers rise up against us? (an evil too

frequent in this country)—they have been tampering with our servants. Do our children discover folly, malice, pride, cruelty, revenge, undutifulness in their words and actions? are they seduced to lewdness or scandalous marriages? it is all by our servants. Nay, the very mistakes, follies, blunders, and absurdities of those in our service, are able to ruffle and discompose the mildest nature, and are often of such consequence as to put whole families into confusion.

Since, therefore, not only our domestic peace and quiet, and the welfare of our children, but even the very safety of our lives, reputations, and fortunes, have so great a dependence upon the choice of our servants, I think it would well become the wisdom of the nation to make some provision in so important an affair. But in the meantime, and perhaps to better purpose, it were to be wished, that the children of both sexes, entertained in the parish charity-schools, were bred up in such a manner as would give them a teachable disposition, and qualify them to learn whatever is required in any sort of service. For instance, they should be taught to read and write, to know somewhat in casting accounts, to understand the principles of religion, to practise cleanliness, to get a spirit of honesty, industry, and thrift, and be severely punished for every neglect in any of these particulars. For it is the misfortune of mankind, that if they are not used to be taught in their early childhood, whereby to acquire what I call a teachable disposition, they cannot, without great difficulty, learn the easiest thing in the course of their lives, but are always awkward and unhandy; their minds, as well as bodies, for want of early practice, growing stiff and unmanageable; as we observe in the sort of gentlemen, who, kept from school by the indulgence of their parents but a few years, are never able to recover the time they have

lost, and grow up in ignorance and all manner of vice, whereof we have too many examples all over the nation. But to return to what I was saying: If these charity children were trained up in the manner I mentioned, and then bound apprentices in the families of gentlemen and citizens (for which a late law giveth great encouragement), being accustomed from their first entrance to be always learning some useful thing, they would learn, in a month, more than another, without those advantages, can do in a year; and in the meantime, be very useful in a family, as far as their age and strength would allow. And when such children come to years of discretion, they will probably be a useful example to their fellow-servants; at least they will prove a strong check upon the rest; for I suppose everybody will allow, that one good, honest, diligent servant in a house, may prevent abundance of mischief in the family.

These are the reasons for which I urge this matter so strongly, and I hope those who listen to me will consider them.

I shall now say something about that great number of poor, who, under the name of common beggars, infest our streets, and fill our ears with their continual cries, and craving importunity. This I shall venture to call an unnecessary evil, brought upon us from the gross neglect, and want of proper management in those whose duty it is to prevent it. But, before I proceed farther, let me humbly presume to vindicate the justice and mercy of God, and his dealings with mankind. Upon this particular he hath not dealt so hardly with his creatures as some would imagine, when they see so many miserable objects ready to perish for want; for, it would infallibly be found, upon strict inquiry, that there is hardly one in twenty of those miserable objects,

who do not owe their present poverty to their own faults, to their present sloth and negligence, to their indiscreet marriage, without the least prospect of supporting a family, to their foolish expensiveness, to their drunkenness and other vices, by which they have squandered their gettings, and contracted diseases in their old age. And, to speak freely, is it any way reasonable or just, that those who have denied themselves many lawful satisfactions and conveniencies of life, from a principle of conscience as well as prudence, that they might not be a burden to the public, should be charged with supporting others, who have brought themselves to less than a morsel of bread, by their idleness, extravagance, and vice? Yet such, and no other, are far the greatest number not only of those who beg in our streets, but even of what we call poor decayed housekeepers, whom we are apt to pity as real objects of charity, and distinguish them from common beggars, although, in truth, they both owe their undoing to the same causes; only the former are too nicely bred to endure walking half naked in the streets, or too proud to own their wants. For the artificer, or other tradesman, who pleadeth he is grown too old to work or look after business, and therefore expecteth assistance as a decayed housekeeper; may we not ask him, why he did not take care, in his youth and strength of days, to make some provision against old age, when he saw so many examples before him of people undone by their idleness and vicious extravagance? And to go a little higher, whence cometh it that so many citizens and shopkeepers, of the most creditable trade, who once made a good figure, go to decay by their expensive pride and vanity, affecting to educate and dress their children above their abilities, or the state of life they ought to expect?

However, since the best of us have too many infirmities to answer for, we ought not to be severe upon those of others; and, therefore, if our brother, through grief, or sickness, or other incapacity, is not in a condition to preserve his being, we ought to support him to the best of our power, without reflecting over seriously on the causes that brought him to his misery. But in order to this, and to turn our charity into its proper channel, we ought to consider who and where those objects are, whom it is chiefly incumbent upon us to support.

By the ancient law of this realm, still in force, every parish is obliged to maintain its own poor; which, although some may think to be not very equal, because many parishes are very rich, and have few poor among them, and others the contrary; yet, I think, may be justly defended: for, as to remote country parishes, in the desert part of the kingdom, the necessaries of life are there so cheap, that the infirm poor may be provided for with little burden to the inhabitants. But in what I am going to say, I shall confine myself only to this city; where we are overrun not only with our own poor, but with a far greater number from every part of the nation. Now, I say, this evil of being encumbered with so many foreign beggars, who have not the least title to our charity, and whom it is impossible for us to support, may be easily remedied, if the government of this city, in conjunction with the clergy and parish officers, would think it worth their care; and I am sure few things deserve it better. For if every parish would take a list of those begging poor which properly belong to it, and compel each of them to wear a badge, marked and numbered, so as to be seen and known by all they meet, and confine them to beg within the limits of their own parish, severely punishing them when

they offend, and driving out all interlopers from other parishes, we could then make a computation of their numbers; and the strollers from the country being driven away, the remainder would not be too many for the charity of those who pass by to maintain; neither would any beggar, although confined to his own parish, be hindered from receiving the charity of the whole town; because, in this case, those well-disposed persons who walk the streets will give their charity to such whom they think proper objects, wherever they meet them, provided they are found in their own parishes, and wearing their badges of distinction. And, as to those parishes which border upon the skirts and suburbs of the town, where country strollers are used to harbour themselves, they must be forced to go back to their homes, when they find nobody to relieve them, because they want that mark which only gives them licence to beg. Upon this point, it were to be wished that inferior parish officers had better encouragement given them to perform their duty in driving away all beggars, who do not belong to the parish, instead of conniving at them, as it is said they do, for some small contribution; for the whole city would save much more by ridding themselves of many hundred beggars, than they would lose by giving parish officers a reasonable support.

It should seem a strange, unaccountable thing, that those who have probably been reduced to want by riot, lewdness and idleness, although they have assurance enough to beg alms publicly from all they meet, should yet be too proud to wear the parish badge, which would turn so much to their own advantage, by ridding them of such great numbers, who now intercept the greatest part of what belongeth to them; yet it is certain, that there are very many who publicly declare they will never wear those

badges, and many others who either hide or throw them away; but the remedy for this is very short, easy, and just, by trying them like vagabonds and sturdy beggars, and forcibly driving them out of the town.

Therefore, as soon as this expedient of wearing badges shall be put in practice, I do earnestly exhort all those who hear me, never to give their alms to any public beggar, who doth not fully comply with this order; by which our number of poor will be so reduced, that it will be much easier to provide for the rest. Our shop-doors will be no longer crowded with so many thieves and pickpockets, in beggars' habits, nor our streets so dangerous to those who are forced to walk in the night.

Thus I have, with great freedom, delivered my thoughts upon this subject, which so nearly concerneth us. It is certainly a bad scheme, to any Christian country, which God hath blessed with fruitfulness, and where the people enjoy the just rights and privileges of mankind, that there should be any beggars at all. But, alas! among us, where the whole nation itself is almost reduced to beggary, by the disadvantages we lie under, and the hardships we are forced to bear; the laziness, ignorance, thoughtlessness, squandering temper, slavish nature, and uncleanly manner of living in the poor Popish natives, together with the cruel oppressions of their landlords, who delight to see their vassals in the dust; I say, that in such a nation, how can we otherwise expect than to be over-run with objects of misery and want? Therefore, there can be no other method to free this city from so intolerable a grievance, than by endeavouring, as far as in us lies, that the burden may be more equally divided, by contributing to maintain our own poor, and forcing the strollers and vagabonds to return to their several

homes in the country, there to smite the conscience of those oppressors who first stripped them of all their substance.

I might here, if the time would permit, offer many arguments to persuade to works of charity; but you hear them so often from the pulpit, that I am willing to hope you may not now want them. Besides, my present design was only to shew where your alms would be best bestowed, to the honour of God, your own ease and advantage, the service of your country, and the benefit of the poor. I desire you will weigh and consider what I have spoken, and according to your several stations and abilities, endeavour to put it in practice; and God give you good success. To whom, with the Son and Holy Ghost, be all honour, &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.

SERMON X.

ON

SLEEPING IN CHURCH.*

ACTS XX. 9.

And there sat in the window a certain young man, named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and while Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

I HAVE chosen these words with design, if possible, to disturb some part in this audience of half an hour's sleep, for the convenience and exercise whereof this place, at this season of the day, is very much celebrated.

There is, indeed, one mortal disadvantage to which all preaching is subject; that those who, by the wickedness of their lives, stand in greatest need,

* If the following discourse did not prove a lasting and effectual cure of the malady referred to in the Dean's congregation, it must be allowed at least to have possessed the merit of a temporary remedy; since it is hardly possible to conceive that any one should indulge in slumber during the delivery.

have usually the smallest share; for either they are absent upon the account of idleness, or spleen, or hatred to religion, or in order to doze away the intemperance of the week: or, if they do come, they are sure to employ their minds rather any other way, than regarding or attending to the business of the place.

The accident which happened to this young man in the text, hath not been sufficient to discourage his successors; but, because the preachers now in the world, however they may exceed St. Paul in the art of setting men to sleep, do extremely fall short of him in the working of miracles; therefore men are become so cautious, as to choose more safe and convenient stations and postures for taking their repose, without hazard of their persons; and, upon the whole matter, choose rather to trust their destruction to a miracle, than their safety. However, this being not the only way by which the lukewarm Christians and scorners of the age discover their neglect and contempt of preaching, I shall enter expressly into consideration of this matter, and order my discourse in the following method:—

First, I shall produce several instances to shew the great neglect of preaching now among us.
Secondly, I shall reckon up some of the usual quarrels men have against preaching.
Thirdly, I shall set forth the great evil of this neglect and contempt of preaching, and discover the real causes whence it proceedeth.
Lastly, I shall offer some remedies against this great and spreading evil.

First, I shall produce certain instances to shew the great neglect of preaching now among us.

These may be reduced under two heads. First,

men's absence from the service of the church; and secondly, their misbehaviour when they are here.

The first instance of men's neglect, is in their frequent absence from the church.

There is no excuse so trivial, that will not pass upon some men's consciences to excuse their attendance at the public worship of God. Some are so unfortunate as to be always indisposed on the Lord's-day, and think nothing so unwholesome as the air of a church. Others have their affairs so oddly contrived, as to be always unluckily prevented by business. With some it is a great mark of wit and deep understanding, to stay at home on Sundays. Others, again, discover strange fits of laziness that seize them particularly on that day, and confine them to their beds. Others are absent out of mere contempt of religion. And, lastly, there are not a few who look upon it as a day of rest, and therefore claim the privilege of their cattle, to keep the Sabbath by eating, drinking, and sleeping, after the toil and labour of the week. Now in all this, the worst circumstance is, that these persons are such, whose companies are most required, and who stand most in need of a physician.

Secondly, Men's great neglect and contempt of preaching appear by their misbehaviour when at church.

If the audience were to be ranked under several heads, according to their behaviour when the word of God is delivered, how small a number would appear of those who receive it as they ought! How much of the seed then sown would be found to fall by the way-side upon stony ground, or among thorns; and how little good ground there would be to take it! A preacher cannot look round from the pulpit, without observing that some are in a perpetual whisper, and, by their air and gesture, give occasion

to suspect that they are in those very minutes defaming their neighbour. Others have their eyes and imagination constantly engaged in such a circle of objects, perhaps to gratify the most unwarrantable desires, that they never once attend to the business of the place; the sound of the preacher's words does not so much as once interrupt them. Some have their minds wandering among idle, worldly, or vicious thoughts. Some lie at catch to ridicule whatever they hear, and with much wit and humour provide a stock of laughter, by furnishing themselves from the pulpit. But, of all misbehaviour, none is comparable to that of those who come here to sleep. Opium is not so stupifying to many persons as an afternoon sermon. Perpetual custom hath so brought it about, that the words of whatever preacher, become only a sort of uniform sound at a distance, than which nothing is more effectual to lull the senses. For that it is the very sound of the sermon which bindeth up their faculties, is manifest from hence, because they all awake so very regularly as soon as it ceaseth, and with much devotion receive the blessing, dozed and besotted with indecencies I am ashamed to repeat.

I proceed, *secondly*, to reckon up some of the usual quarrels men have against preaching, and to shew the unreasonableness of them.

Such unwarrantable behaviour as I have described among Christians, in the house of God, in a solemn assembly, while their faith and duty are explained and delivered, have put those who are guilty upon inventing some excuses to extenuate their fault: this they do by turning the blame either upon the particular preacher, or upon preaching in general. First, they object against the particular preacher; his manner, his delivery, his voice, are disagreeable; his style and expression are flat and low; sometimes

improper and absurd; the matter is heavy, trivial, and insipid; sometimes despicable and perfectly ridiculous; or else, on the other side, he runs up into unintelligible speculation, empty notions, and abstracted flights, all clad in words above usual understandings.

Secondly, They object against preaching in general; it is a perfect road of talk; they know already whatever can be said; they have heard the same a hundred times over. They quarrel that preachers do not relieve an old beaten subject with wit and invention; and that now the art is lost of moving men's passions, so common among the ancient orators of Greece and Rome. These, and the like objections, are frequently in the mouths of men who despise the foolishness of preaching. But let us examine the reasonableness of them.

The doctrine delivered by all preachers is the same: "So we preach, and so ye believe:" But the manner of delivering is suited to the skill and abilities of each, which differ in preachers, just as in the rest of mankind. However, in personal dislikes of a particular preacher, are these men sure they are always in the right? Do they consider how mixed a thing is every audience, whose taste and judgment differ, perhaps every day, not only from each other, but themselves? and how to calculate a discourse that shall exactly suit them all, is beyond the force and reach of human reason, knowledge, or invention. Wit and eloquence are shining qualities, that God hath imparted, in great degrees, to very few; nor any more to be expected, in the generality of any rank among men, than riches and honour. But further: if preaching in general be all old and beaten, and that they are already so well acquainted with it, more shame and guilt to them who so little edify by it. But these men, whose ears are so delicate as not to endure a

plain discourse of religion, who expect a constant supply of wit and eloquence on a subject handled so many thousand times; what will they say when we turn the objection upon themselves, who, with all the rude and profane liberty of discourse they take, upon so many thousand subjects, are so dull as to furnish nothing but tedious repetitions, and little paltry, nauseous commonplaces, so vulgar, so worn, or so obvious, as, upon any other occasion but that of advancing vice, would be hooted off the stake? Nor, lastly, are preachers justly blamed for neglecting human oratory to move the passions, which is not the business of a Christian orator, whose office it is only to work upon faith and reason. All other eloquence hath been a perfect cheat, to stir up men's passions against truth and justice, for the service of a faction; to put false colours upon things, and by an amusement of agreeable words, make the worst reason appear to be the better. This is certainly not to be allowed in Christian eloquence, and, therefore, St. Paul took quite the other course; he "came not with the excellency of words, or enticing speech of men's wisdom, but in plain evidence of the Spirit and power." And perhaps it was for that reason the young man, Eutychus, used to the Grecian eloquence, grew tired, and fell so fast asleep.

I go on, *Thirdly*, to set forth the great evil of this neglect and scorn of preaching, and to discover the real causes whence it proceedeth.

I think it is obvious, that this neglect of preaching hath very much occasioned the great decay of religion among us. To this may be imputed no small part of that contempt some men bestow on the clergy; for, whoever talketh without being regarded, is sure to be despised. To this we owe, in a great measure, the spreading of atheism and in-

fidelity among us; for religion, like all other things, is soonest put out of countenance by being ridiculed. The scorn of preaching might perhaps have been at first introduced by men of nice ears and refined taste; but it is now become a spreading evil, through all degrees, and both sexes; for, since sleeping, talking, and laughing, are qualities sufficient to furnish out a critic, the meanest and most ignorant have set up a title, and succeeded in it as well as their betters. Thus are the last efforts of reforming mankind rendered wholly useless. "How shall they hear," saith the apostle, "without a preacher?" But, if they have a preacher, and make it a point of wit or breeding not to hear him, what remedy is left? To this neglect of preaching we may also entirely impute that gross ignorance among us in the very principles of religion, which it is amazing to find in persons who very much value their own knowledge and understanding in other things: yet it is a visible, inexcusable ignorance, even in the meanest among us, considering the many advantages they have of learning their duty. And it hath been the great encouragement to all manner of vice: for in vain we preach down sin to a people "whose hearts are waxed gross, whose ears are dull of hearing, and whose eyes are closed." Therefore Christ himself, in his discourses, frequently rouseth up the attention of the multitude, and of his disciples themselves, with this expression, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." But, among all neglects of preaching, none is so fatal as that of sleeping in the house of God. A scorner may listen to truth and reason, and in time grow serious; an unbeliever may feel the pangs of a guilty conscience; one whose thoughts or eyes wander among other objects, may, by a lucky word, be called back to attention; but the sleeper shuts up all avenues to his soul; he is

"like the deaf adder that hearkeneth not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." And we may preach with as good success to the grave that is under his feet.

But the great evil of his neglect will farther yet appear, from considering the real causes whence it proceedeth; whereof, the first I take to be an evil conscience. Many men come to church to save or gain a reputation, or because they will not be singular, but comply with an established custom; yet, all the while, they are loaded with the guilt of old rooted sins. These men can expect to hear of nothing but terrors and threatenings, their sins laid open in true colours, and eternal misery the reward of them; therefore no wonder they stop their ears, and divert their thoughts, and seek any amusement rather than stir the hell within them.

Another cause of this neglect is, a heart set upon worldly things. Men whose minds are much enslaved to earthly affairs all the week, cannot disengage or break the chain of their thoughts so suddenly, as to apply to a discourse that is wholly foreign to what they have most at heart. Tell a usurer of charity, and mercy, and restitution, you talk to the deaf: his heart and soul, with all his senses, are got among his bags, or he is gravely asleep, and dreaming of a mortgage. Tell a man of business that the cares of the world choke the good seed; that we must not encumber ourselves with much serving; that the salvation of his soul is the one thing necessary: you see, indeed, the shape of a man before you, but his faculties are all gone off among clients and papers, thinking how to defend a bad cause, or find flaws in a good one; or he weareth out the time in drowsy nods.

A third cause of the great neglect and scorn of preaching, ariseth from the practice of men who set

up to decry and disparage religion; these, being zealous to promote infidelity and vice, learn a rote of buffoonery, that serveth all occasions, and refutes the strongest arguments for piety and good manners. These have a set of ridicule calculated for all sermons, and all preachers, and can be extremely witty as often as they please upon the same fund.

Let me now, in the last place, offer some remedies against this great evil.

It will be one remedy against the contempt of preaching, rightly to consider the end for which it was designed. There are many who place abundance of merit in going to church, although it be with no other prospect but that of being well entertained, wherein, if they happen to fail, they return wholly disappointed. Hence it is become an impertinent vein among people of all sorts to hunt after what they call a good sermon, as if it were a matter of pastime and diversion. Our business, alas! is quite another thing; either to learn, or, at least, be reminded of our duty; to apply the doctrines delivered, compare the rules we hear with our lives and actions, and find wherein we have transgressed. These are the dispositions men should bring into the house of God, and then they will be little concerned about the preacher's wit or eloquence, nor be curious to inquire out his faults and infirmities, but consider how to correct their own.

Another remedy against the contempt of preaching is, that men would consider, whether it be not reasonable to give more allowance for the different abilities of preachers than they usually do. Refinements of style, and flights of wit, as they are not properly the business of any preacher, so they cannot possibly be the talents of all. In most other discourses, men are satisfied with sober sense and

plain reason; and, as understandings usually go, even that is not over frequent. Then why they should be so over nice in expectation of eloquence, where it is neither necessary nor convenient, is hard to imagine.

Lastly, The scorners of preaching would do well to consider, that this talent of ridicule they value so much, is a perfection very easily acquired, and applied to all things whatsoever; neither is anything at all the worse, because it is capable of being perverted to burlesque: perhaps it may be the more perfect upon that score; since we know, the most celebrated pieces have been thus treated with greatest success. It is in any man's power to suppose a fool's cap on the wisest head, and then laugh at his own supposition. I think there are not many things cheaper than supposing and laughing; and if the uniting these two talents can bring a thing into contempt, it is hard to know where it may end.

To conclude. These considerations may, perhaps, have some effect while men are awake; but what arguments shall we use to the sleeper? what methods shall we take to hold open his eyes? Will he be moved by considerations of common civility? We know it is reckoned a point of very bad manners to sleep in private company, when, perhaps, the tedious impertinence of many talkers would render it at least as excusable as the dullest sermon. Do they think it a small thing to watch four hours at a play, where all virtue and religion are openly reviled; and can they not watch one half hour to hear them defended? Is this to deal like a judge, (I mean like a good judge,) to listen on one side of the cause, and sleep on the other? I shall add but one word more: That this indecent sloth is very much owing to that luxury and excess men usually practise upon this day, by which half the service

thereof is turned to sin; men dividing their time between God and their bellies, when, after a gluttonous meal, their senses dozed and stupified, they retire to God's house to sleep out the afternoon. Surely, brethren, these things ought not so to be.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." And God give us all grace to hear and receive his holy word to the salvation of our own souls!

SERMON XI.

ON

THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD.

—o—

1 Cor. iii. 19.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

IT is remarkable, that about the time of our Saviour's coming into the world, all kinds of learning flourished to a very great degree; insomuch, that nothing is more frequent in the mouths of many men, even such who pretend to read and to know, than an extravagant praise and opinion of the wisdom and virtue of the Gentile sages of those days, and likewise of those ancient philosophers who went before them, whose doctrines are left upon record, either by themselves or other writers. As far as this may be taken for granted, it may be said, that the providence of God brought this about for several very wise ends and purposes: for it is certain, that these philosophers had been a long time before searching out where to fix the true happiness of man; and not being able to agree upon any cer-

tainty about it, they could not possibly but conclude, if they judged impartially, that all their inquiries were, in the end, but vain and fruitless; the consequence of which must be, not only an acknowledgment of the weakness of all human wisdom, but likewise an open passage hereby made, for letting in those beams of light, which the glorious sunshine of the gospel then brought into the world, by revealing those hidden truths which they had so long before been labouring to discover, and fixing the general happiness of mankind beyond all controversy and dispute. And therefore the providence of God wisely suffered men of deep genius and learning then to arise, who should search into the truth of the gospel now made known, and canvass its doctrines with all the subtilty and knowledge they were masters of, and in the end freely acknowledge that to be the true wisdom only, "which cometh from above."

However, to make a farther inquiry into the truth of this observation, I doubt not but there is reason to think, that a great many of those encomiums given to ancient philosophers are taken upon trust, and by a sort of men who are not very likely to be at the pains of an inquiry that would employ so much time and thinking. For, the usual ends why men affect this kind of discourse, appear generally to be either out of ostentation, that they may pass upon the world for persons of great knowledge and observation; or, what is worse, there are some who highly exalt the wisdom of those Gentile sages, thereby obliquely to glance at and traduce divine revelation, and more especially that of the gospel; for the consequence they would have us draw is this: that since those ancient philosophers rose to a greater pitch of wisdom and virtue than was ever known among Christians, and all this purely upon

the strength of their own reason, and liberty of thinking, therefore it must follow, that either all revelation is false, or, what is worse, that it has depraved the nature of man, and left him worse than it found him.

But this high opinion of heathen wisdom is not very ancient in the world, nor at all countenanced from primitive times. Our Saviour had but a low esteem of it, as appears by his treatment of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who followed the doctrines of Plato and Epicurus. St. Paul likewise, who was well versed in all the Grecian literature, seems very much to despise their philosophy, as we find in his writings; cautioning the Colossians to "beware lest any man spoil them through philosophy and vain deceit." And in another place, he advises Timothy to "avoid prophane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called;" that is, not to introduce into the Christian doctrine the janglings of those vain philosophers, which they would pass upon the world for science. And the reasons he gives are, first, That those who professed them did err concerning the faith; secondly, because the knowledge of them did increase ungodliness, vain babbings being otherwise expounded vanities, or empty sounds; that is, tedious disputes about words, which the philosophers were always so full of, and which were the natural product of disputes and dissensions between several sects.

Neither had the primitive fathers any great or good opinion of the heathen philosophy, as it is manifest from several passages in their writings: so that this vein of affecting to raise the reputation of those sages so high, is a mode and a vice but of yesterday, assumed chiefly, as I have said, to disparage revealed knowledge, and the consequences of it among us.

Now, because this is a prejudice which may prevail with some persons, so far as to lessen the influence of the gospel; and whereas, therefore, this is an opinion which men of education are likely to be encountered with, when they have produced themselves into the world; I shall endeavour to shew that their preference of heathen wisdom and virtue before that of the Christian is every way unjust, and grounded upon ignorance or mistake; in order to which, I shall consider four things:

First, I shall produce certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy in general fell short, and was very imperfect.

Secondly, I shall shew, in several instances, where some of the most renowned philosophers have been grossly defective in their lessons of morality.

Thirdly, I shall prove the perfection of Christian wisdom, from the proper characters and marks of it.

Lastly, I shall shew that the great examples of wisdom and virtue, among the heathen wise men, were produced by personal merit, and not influenced by the doctrine of any sect; whereas, in Christianity, it is quite the contrary.

First, I shall produce certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy in general fell short, and was very imperfect.

My design is, to persuade men, that Christian philosophy is in all things preferable to heathen wisdom; from which, or its professors, I shall, however, have no occasion to detract. They were as wise, and as good, as it was possible for them to be under such disadvantages; and would have probably been infinitely more so, with such aids as we enjoy:

but our lessons are certainly much better, however our practices may fall short.

The first point I shall mention is, that universal defect which was in all their schemes, that they could not agree about their chief good, or wherein to place the happiness of mankind; nor had any of them a tolerable answer upon this difficulty, to satisfy a reasonable person. For, to say, as the most plausible of them did, "that happiness consisted in virtue," was but vain babbling, and a mere sound of words, to amuse others and themselves; because they were not agreed what this virtue was, or wherein it did consist; and likewise, because several among the best of them taught quite different things, placing happiness in health or good fortune, in riches or in honour, where all were agreed that virtue was not, as I shall have occasion to shew, when I speak of their particular tenets.

The second great defect in the Gentile philosophy, was, that it wanted some suitable reward, proportioned to the better part of man, his mind, as an encouragement for his progress in virtue. The difficulties they met with upon the score of this default were great, and not to be accounted for: bodily goods being only suitable to bodily wants, are no rest at all for the mind; and if they were, yet are they not the proper fruits of wisdom and virtue, being equally attainable by the ignorant and wicked. Now, human nature is so constituted, that we can never pursue anything heartily, but upon hopes of a reward. If we run a race, it is in expectation of a prize; and the greater the prize, the faster we run; for an incorruptible crown, if we understand it, and believe it to be such, more than a corruptible one. But some of the philosophers gave all this quite another turn, and pretended to refine so far as to call virtue its own reward, and

worthy to be followed only for itself; whereas, if there be anything in this more than the sound of the words, it is at least too abstracted to become a universal influencing principle in the world, and therefore could not be of general use.

It was the want of assigning some happiness proportioned to the soul of man, that caused many of them, either, on the one hand, to be sour and morose, supercilious and untreatable; or, on the other, to fall into the vulgar pursuits of common men, to hunt after greatness and riches, to make their court, and to serve occasions; as Plato did to the younger Dionysius, and Aristotle to Alexander the Great. So impossible it is for a man, who looks no farther than the present world, to fix himself long in a contemplation where the present world has no part: he has no sure hold, no firm footing: he can never expect to remove the earth he rests upon, while he has no support besides for his feet, but wants, like Archimedes, some other place whereon to stand. To talk of bearing pain and grief, without any sort of present or future hope, cannot be purely greatness of spirit; there must be a mixture in it of affectation, and an allay of pride; or perhaps is wholly counterfeit.

It is true, there has been all along in the world a notion of rewards and punishments in another life: but it seems to have rather served as an entertainment to poets, or as a terror of children, than a settled principle by which men pretended to govern any of their actions. The last celebrated words of Socrates, a little before his death, do not seem to reckon or build much upon any such opinion; and Cæsar made no scruple to disown it, and ridicule it in open senate.

Thirdly, The greatest and wisest of all their philosophers were never able to give any satisfaction to

others and themselves, in their notions of a Deity. They were often extremely gross and absurd in their conceptions; and those who made the fairest conjectures, are such as were generally allowed by the learned, to have seen the system of Moses, if I may so call it, who was in great reputation at that time in the heathen world, as we find by Diodorus, Justin, Longinus, and other authors; for the rest, the wisest among them laid aside all notions after a Deity, as a disquisition vain and fruitless, which indeed it was, upon unrevealed principles; and those who ventured to engage too far, fell into incoherence and confusion.

Fourthly, Those among them who had the justest conceptions of a Divine Power, and did also admit a Providence, had no notion at all of entirely relying and depending upon either; they trusted in themselves for all things; but as for a trust or dependence upon God, they would not have understood the phrase; it made no part of the profane style.

Therefore it was, that in all issues and events which they could not reconcile to their own sentiments of reason and justice, they were quite disconcerted: they had no retreat; but upon every blow of adverse fortune, either affected to be indifferent, or grew sullen and severe, or else yielded and sunk like other men.

Having now produced certain points, wherein the wisdom and virtue of all unrevealed philosophy fell short, and was very imperfect; I go on, in the second place, to shew, in several instances, where some of the most renowned philosophers have been grossly defective in their lessons of morality.

Thales, the founder of the Ionic sect, so celebrated for morality, being asked how a man might bear ill-fortune with greatest ease, answered, "By seeing his enemies in a worse condition." An

answer truly barbarous, unworthy of human nature, and which included such consequences as must destroy all society from the world.

Solon lamenting the death of a son, one told him, "You lament in vain." "Therefore," said he, "I lament, because it is in vain." This was a plain confession how imperfect all his philosophy was, and that something was still wanting. He owned that all his wisdom and morals were useless, and this upon one of the most frequent accidents in life. How much better could he have learned to support himself even from David, by his entire dependence upon God: and that, before our Saviour had advanced the notions of religion to the height and perfection wherewith he hath instructed his disciples!

Plato himself, with all his refinements, placed happiness in wisdom, health, good fortune, honour, and riches; and held that they who enjoyed all these were perfectly happy: which opinion was indeed unworthy its owner, leaving the wise and good man wholly at the mercy of uncertain chance, and to be miserable without resource.

His scholar Aristotle fell more grossly into the same notion, and plainly affirmed, "That virtue, without the goods of fortune, was not sufficient for happiness, but that a wise man must be miserable in poverty and sickness." Nay, Diogenes himself, from whose pride and singularity one would have have looked for other notions, delivered it as his opinion, "That a poor old man was the most miserable thing in life."

Zeno also and his followers fell into many absurdities, among which nothing could be greater than that of maintaining all crimes to be equal; which, instead of making vice hateful, rendered it as a thing indifferent and familiar to all men.

Lastly, Epicurus had no notion of justice, but as it was profitable; and his placing happiness in pleasure, with all the advantages he could expound it by, was liable to very great exception: for, although he taught that pleasure did consist in virtue, yet he did not any way fix or ascertain the boundaries of virtue, as he ought to have done; by which means he misled his followers into the greatest vices, making their names to become odious and scandalous, even in the heathen world.

I have produced these few instances from a great many others, to shew the imperfection of heathen philosophy, wherein I have confined myself wholly to their morality. And surely we may pronounce upon it, in the words of St. James, that "This wisdom descended not from above, but was earthly and sensual." What if I had produced their absurd notions about God and the soul? it would then have completed the character given it by that apostle, and appeared to have been devilish too. But it is easy to observe, from the nature of these few particulars, that their defects in morals were purely the flagging and fainting of the mind, for want of a support by revelation from God.

I proceed, therefore, in the third place, to shew the perfection of Christian wisdom from above; and I shall endeavour to make it appear, from those proper characters and marks of it, by the apostle before mentioned, in the third chapter, and 15th, 16th, and 17th verses.

The words run thus:—

"This wisdom descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

"For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

"But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated,

full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

"The wisdom from above is first pure." This purity of the mind and spirit is peculiar to the gospel. Our Saviour says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." A mind free from all pollution of lusts shall have a daily vision of God, whereof unrevealed religion can form no notion. This it is that keeps us unspotted from the world; and hereby many have been prevailed upon to live in the practice of all purity, holiness, and righteousness, far beyond the examples of the most celebrated philosophers.

It is "peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated." The Christian doctrine teacheth us all those dispositions that make us affable and courteous, gentle, and kind, without any morose leaven of pride or vanity, which entered into the composition of most heathen schemes; so we are taught to be meek and lowly. Our Saviour's last legacy was peace; and he commands us to forgive our offending brother unto seventy times seven. Christian wisdom is full of mercy and good works, teaching the height of all moral virtues, of which the heathens fell infinitely short. Plato, indeed, (and it is worth observing,) has somewhere a dialogue, or part of one, about forgiving our enemies, which was perhaps the highest strain ever reached by man, without divine assistance; yet how little is that to what our Saviour commands us! "To love them that hate us; to bless them that curse us; and to do good to them that despitefully use us."

Christian wisdom is "without partiality;" it is not calculated for this or that nation of people, but the whole race of mankind; not so the philosophical schemes, which were narrow and confined, adapted to their peculiar towns, governments, or sects; but,

" in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Lastly, It is " without hypocrisy ; " it appears to be what it really is ; it is all of a piece. By the doctrines of the gospel, we are so far from being allowed to publish to the world those virtues we have not, that we are commanded to hide even from ourselves those we really have, and not to let our right hand know what our left hand does; unlike several branches of the heathen wisdom, which pretended to teach insensibility and indifference, magnanimity and contempt of life, while, at the same time, in other parts, it belied its own doctrines.

I come now, in the last place, to shew that the great examples of wisdom and virtue, among the Grecian sages, were produced by personal merit, and not influenced by the doctrine of any particular sect; whereas, in Christianity, it is quite the contrary.

The two virtues most celebrated by ancient moralists were Fortitude and Temperance, as relating to the government of man in his private capacity, to which their schemes were generally addressed and confined ; and the two instances wherein those virtues arrived at the greatest height were Socrates and Cato. But neither those, nor any other virtues possessed by these two, were at all owing to any lessons or doctrines of a sect. For Socrates himself was of none at all ; and although Cato was called a stoic, it was more from a resemblance of manners in his worst qualities, than that he avowed himself one of their disciples. The same may be affirmed of many other great men of antiquity. Whence I infer, that those who were renowned for virtue among them, were more obliged to the good natural dispositions of their own minds

than to the doctrines of any sect they pretended to follow.

On the other side, as the examples of fortitude and patience among the primitive Christians, have been infinitely greater and more numerous, so they were altogether the product of their principles and doctrine; and were such as the same persons, without those aids, would never have arrived to. Of this truth most of the apostles, with many thousand martyrs, are a cloud of witnesses beyond exception. Having therefore spoken so largely upon the former heads, I shall dwell no longer upon this.

And, if it should here be objected, Why does not Christianity still produce the same effects? it is easy to answer, First, That although the number of pretended Christians be great, yet that of true believers, in proportion to the other, was never so small; and it is a true lively faith alone, that, by the assistance of God's grace, can influence our practice.

Secondly, We may answer, that Christianity itself has very much suffered, by being blended up with Gentile philosophy. The Platonic system, first taken into religion, was thought to have given matter for some early heresies in the church. When disputes began to arise, the Peripatetic forms were introduced by Scotus, as best fitted for controversy. And, however this may now have become necessary, it was surely the author of a litigious vein, which has since occasioned very pernicious consequences, stopped the progress of Christianity, and been a great promoter of vice; verifying that sentence given by St. James, and mentioned before, "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." This was the fatal stop to the Grecians, in their progress both of arts and arms; their wise men were divided under several sects, and their governments under several common-

wealths, all in opposition to each other; which engaged them in eternal quarrels among themselves while they should have been armed against the common enemy. And I wish we had no other examples, from the like causes, less foreign or ancient than that. Diogenes said Socrates was a madman; the disciples of Zeno and Epicurus, nay of Plato and Aristotle, were engaged in fierce disputes about the most insignificant trifles. And if this be the present language and practice among us Christians, no wonder that Christianity does not still produce the same effects which it did at first, when it was received and embraced in its utmost purity and perfection: for such wisdom as this cannot "descend from above;" but must be "earthly, sensual, devilish; full of confusion and every evil work:" whereas, "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." This is the true heavenly wisdom, which Christianity only can boast of, and which the greatest of the heathen wise men could never arrive at.

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON XII.

ON DOING GOOD:

A SERMON ON THE OCCASION OF WOOD'S PROJECT.*

(WRITTEN IN 1724.)

GALATIANS vi. 10.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.

NATURE directs every one of us, and God permits us, to consult our own private good before the private good of any other person whatsoever. We are, indeed, commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves, but not as well as ourselves. The love we have for ourselves, is to be the pattern of that love we ought to have toward our neighbour; but, as the copy doth not equal the original, so my

* "I did very lately, as I thought it my duty, preach to the people under my inspection, upon the subject of Mr. Wood's coin; and although I never heard that my sermon gave the least offence, as I am sure none was intended, yet, if it were now printed and published, I cannot say I would insure it from the hands of the common hangman, or my person from those of a messenger." See *The Drapier's Letters, No. VI.*

"I never," said the Dean some time after in a jocular conversation, "preached but twice in my life, and they were not sermons,

neighbour cannot think it hard, if I prefer myself, who am the original, before him, who is only the copy. Thus, if any mattter equally concern the life, the reputation, the profit of my neighbour and my own; the law of nature, which is the law of God, obligeth me to take care of myself first, and afterward of him. And this I need not be at much pains in persuading you to; for the want of self-love, with regard to things of this world, is not among the faults of mankind. But then, on the other side, if, by a small hurt and loss to myself, I can procure a great good to my neighbour, in that case his interest is to be preferred. For example, if I can be sure of saving his life, without great danger to my own; if I can preserve him from being undone, without ruining myself; or recover his reputation, without blasting mine; all this I am obliged to do: and if I sincerely perform it, I do then obey the command of God, in loving my neighbour as myself.

But, besides this love we owe to every man in his particular capacity, under the title of our neighbour, there is yet a duty of a more large extensive nature incumbent on us; which is, our love to our neighbour in his public capacity, as he is a member of that great body the commonwealth, under the same

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but pamphlets." Being asked on what subject, he replied, "They were against Wood's halfpence." See *Pilkington*, vol. I. p. 56.

"The pieces relating to Ireland are those of a public nature; in which the Dean appears, as usual, in the best light, because they do honour to his heart as well as to his head; furnishing some additional proofs, that, though he was very free in his abuse of the inhabitants of that country, as well natives as foreigners, he had their interest sincerely at heart, and perfectly understood it. His sermon upon Doing Good, though peculiarly adapted to Ireland and Wood's designs upon it, contains perhaps the best motives to patriotism that were ever delivered within so small a compass."—*Burke.*

government with ourselves; and this is usually called love of the public, and is a duty to which we are more strictly obliged than even that of loving ourselves; because therein ourselves are also contained, as well as all our neighbours, in one great body. This love of the public, or of the commonwealth, or love of our country, was in ancient times properly known by the name of virtue, because it was the greatest of all virtues, and was supposed to contain all virtues in it; and many great examples of this virtue are left us on record, scarcely to be believed, or even conceived, in such a base, corrupted, wicked age as this we live in. In those times, it was common for men to sacrifice their lives for the good of their country, although they had neither hope nor belief of future rewards; whereas, in our days, very few make the least scruple of sacrificing a whole nation, as well as their own souls, for a little present gain; which often hath been known to end in their own ruin in this world, as it certainly must in that to come.

Have we not seen men, for the sake of some petty employment, give up the very natural rights and liberties of their country, and of mankind, in the ruin of which themselves must at last be involved? Are not these corruptions gotten among the meanest of our people, who, for a piece of money, will give their votes at a venture, for the disposal of their own lives and fortunes, without considering whether it be to those who are most likely to betray or defend them? But, if I were to produce only one instance of a hundred, wherein we fail in this duty of loving our country, it would be an endless labour; and therefore I shall not attempt it.

But here I would not be misunderstood: by the love of our country, I do not mean loyalty to our king, for that is a duty of another nature; and a man

may be very loyal, in the common sense of the word, without one grain of public good at his heart. Witness this very kingdom we live in. I verily believe, that since the beginning of the world, no nation upon earth ever shewed (all circumstances considered) such high constant marks of loyalty, in all their actions and behaviour, as we have done; and, at the same time, no people ever appeared more utterly void of what is called a public spirit. When I say the people, I mean the bulk or mass of the people; for I have nothing to do with those in power.

Therefore I shall think my time not ill spent, if I can persuade most or all of you who hear me, to shew the love you have for your country, by endeavouring, in your several situations, to do all the public good you are able. For I am certainly persuaded, that all our misfortunes arise from no other original cause than that general disregard among us to the public welfare.

I therefore undertake to shew you three things:—

First, That there are few people so weak or mean, who have it not sometimes in their power to be useful to the public.

Secondly, That it is often in the power of the meanest among mankind to do mischief to the public.

And, *lastly*, That all wilful injuries done to the public, are very great and aggravated sins in the sight of God.

First, There are few people so weak or mean, who have it not sometimes in their power to be useful to the public.

Solomon tells us of a poor wise man, who saved a city by his counsel. It hath often happened that a private soldier, by some unexpected brave attempt, hath been instrumental in obtaining a great victory.

How many obscure men have been authors of very useful inventions, whereof the world now reaps the benefit! The very example of honesty and industry in a poor tradesman, will sometimes spread through a neighbourhood, when others see how successful he is; and thus so many useful members are gained, for which the whole body of the public is the better. Whoever is blessed with a true public spirit, God will certainly put it into his way to make use of that blessing, for the ends it was given him, by some means or other: and therefore it hath been observed, in most ages, that the greatest actions for the benefit of the commonwealth have been performed by the wisdom or courage, the contrivance or industry, of particular men, and not of numbers: and that the safety of a kingdom hath often been owing to those hands whence it was least expected.

But, *secondly*, It is often in the power of the meanest among mankind to do mischief to the public: and hence arise most of those miseries with which the states and kingdoms of the earth are infested. How many great princes have been murdered by the meanest ruffians! The weakest hand can open a flood-gate to drown a country, which a thousand of the strongest cannot stop. Those who have thrown off all regard for public good, will often have it in their way to do public evil, and will not fail to exercise that power whenever they can. The greatest blow given of late to this kingdom, was by the dishonesty of a few manufacturers; who, by imposing bad ware at foreign markets, in almost the only traffic permitted to us, did half ruin that trade: by which this poor unhappy kingdom now suffers in the midst of sufferings. I speak not here of persons in high stations, who ought to be free from all reflection, and are supposed always to intend the welfare of the

community: but we now find by experience, that the meanest instrument may, by the concurrence of accidents, have it in his power to bring a whole kingdom to the very brink of destruction, and is at this present endeavouring to finish his work; and hath agents among ourselves, who are contented to see their own country undone, to be small sharers in that iniquitous gain, which at last must end in their own ruin, as well as ours. I confess it was chiefly the consideration of that great danger we are in, which engaged me to discourse to you on this subject, to exhort you to a love of your country, and a public spirit, when all you have is at stake; to prefer the interest of your prince and your fellow-subjects before that of one destructive impostor, and a few of his adherents.

Perhaps it may be thought by some that this way of discoursing is not so proper from the pulpit. But, surely, when an open attempt is made, and far carried on, to make a great kingdom one large poor-house, to deprive us of all means to exercise hospitality or charity, to turn our cities and churches into ruins, to make the country a desert for wild beasts and robbers, to destroy all arts and sciences, all trades and manufactures, and the very tillage of the ground, only to enrich one obscure, ill-designing projector and his followers; it is time for the pastor to cry out, "that the wolf is getting into his flock," to warn them to stand together, and all to consult the common safety. And God be praised for his infinite goodness in raising such a spirit of union among us, at least in this point, in the midst of all our former divisions; which union, if it continue, will in all probability defeat the pernicious design of this pestilent enemy to the nation!

But hence it clearly follows how necessary the

love of our country, or a public spirit, is, in every particular man, since the wicked have so many opportunities of doing public mischief. Every man is upon his guard for his private advantage; but, where the public is concerned, he is apt to be negligent, considering himself only as one among two or three millions, among whom the loss is equally shared; and thus, he thinks, he can be no great sufferer. Meanwhile the trader, the farmer, and the shopkeeper, complain of the hardness and deadness of the times, and wonder whence it comes; while it is in a great measure owing to their own folly, for want of that love of their country, and public spirit and firm union among themselves, which are so necessary to the prosperity of every nation.

Another method, by which the meanest wicked man may have it in his power to injure the public, is false accusation; whereof this kingdom hath afforded too many examples: neither is it long since no man, whose opinions were thought to differ from those in fashion, could safely converse beyond his nearest friends, for fear of being sworn against, as a traitor, by those who made a traffic of perjury and subornation; by which the very peace of the nation was disturbed, and men fled from each other as they would from a lion or a bear got loose. And it is very remarkable, that the pernicious project now in hand, to reduce us to beggary, was forwarded by one of these false accusers, who had been convicted of endeavouring, by perjury and subornation, to take away the lives of several innocent persons here among us: and, indeed, there could not be a more proper instrument for such a work.

Another method, by which the meanest people may do injury to the public, is the spreading of lies and false rumours: thus raising a distrust among

[illegible] mistake their [illegible] friends: [illegible] a practice [illegible] the whole kingdom [illegible] raised upon occasion [illegible] As it hath also [illegible] mentioned, where one [illegible] wants where they [illegible] them where they were [illegible] in a project of utterly [illegible] and may still succeed, [illegible] that public spirit, which [illegible] kindled in us upon this [illegible]

[illegible] is many times, as it were, [illegible] meanest instrument, who can be [illegible] watch opportunities of doing it [illegible] principles of avarice or malice, [illegible] are deeply rooted in too many [illegible] which there can be no defence, [illegible] in all honest men, to be closely [illegible] in showing their love to their [illegible] the public interest to their [illegible] advantage. If a passenger, in a [illegible] should hide his goods, that they [illegible] overboard to lighten the ship, [illegible] consequence? The ship is cast [illegible] his life and goods together.

[illegible] of men, who, through greediness [illegible] brought infected goods into a nation; [illegible] plague, whereof the owners and their [illegible] first. Let those among us con- [illegible] tremble, whose houses are privately [illegible] those materials of beggary and desola- [illegible] brought over to be scattered like a [illegible] among their countrymen, which may pro-

bably first seize upon themselves and their families, until their houses shall be made a dunghill.

I shall mention one practice more, by which the meanest instruments often succeed in doing public mischief; and this is, by deceiving us with plausible arguments, to make us believe that the most ruinous project they can offer is intended for our good, as it happened in the case so often mentioned. For the poor ignorant people, allured by the appearing convenience in their small dealings, did not discover the serpent in the brass, but were ready, like the Israelites, to offer incense to it; neither could the wisdom of the nation convince them, until some, of good intentions, made the cheat so plain to their sight, that those who run may read. And thus the design was to treat us, in every point, as the Philistines treated Samson (I mean when he was betrayed by Delilah), first to put out our eyes, and then to bind us with fetters of brass.

I proceed to the last thing I proposed, which was to shew you that all wilful injuries done to the public, are very great and aggravating sins in the sight of God.

First, It is apparent from Scripture, and most agreeable to reason, that the safety and welfare of nations are under the most peculiar care of God's providence. Thus he promised Abraham to save Sodom, if only ten righteous men could be found in it. Thus the reason which God gave to Jonas for not destroying Nineveh was, because there were six score thousand men in that city.

All government is from God, who is the God of order; and therefore whoever attempts to breed confusion or disturbance among a people, doth his utmost to take the government of the world out of God's hands, and to put it into the hands of the

devil, who is the author of confusion. By which it is plain, that no crime, how heinous soever, committed against particular persons, can equal the guilt of him who does injury to the public.

Secondly, All offenders against their country lie under this grievous difficulty, that it is impossible to obtain a pardon or make restitution. The bulk of mankind are very quick at resenting injuries, and very slow in forgiving them: and how shall one man be able to obtain the pardon of millions, or repair the injury he hath done to millions? How shall those, who, by a most destructive fraud, got the whole wealth of our neighbouring kingdom into their hands, be ever able to make a recompence? How will the authors and promoters of that villainous project, for the ruin of this poor country, be able to account with us for the injuries they have already done, although they should no farther succeed? The deplorable case of such wretches must entirely be left to the unfathomable mercies of God: for those who know the least in religion are not ignorant, that without our utmost endeavours to make restitution to the person injured, and to obtain his pardon, added to a sincere repentance, there is no hope of salvation given in the gospel.

Lastly, All offences against our own country have this aggravation, that they are ungrateful and unnatural. It is to our country we owe those laws, which protect us in our lives, our liberties, our properties, and our religion. Our country produced us into the world, and continues to nourish us, so that it is usually called our mother; and there have been examples of great magistrates, who have put their own children to death for endeavouring to betray their country, as if they had attempted the life of their natural parent.

Thus I have briefly shewn you how terrible a sin it is to be an enemy to our country, in order to incite you to the contrary virtue, which at this juncture is so highly necessary, when every man's endeavour will be of use. We have hitherto been just able to support ourselves under many hardships; but now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, and nothing but a firm union among us can prevent our utter undoing. This we are obliged to, in duty to our gracious king, as well as to ourselves. Let us therefore preserve that public spirit, which God hath raised in us, for our own temporal interest. For, if this wicked project should succeed, which it cannot do but by our own folly; if we sell ourselves for nought, the merchant, the shopkeeper, the artificer must fly to the desert with their miserable families, there to starve, or live upon rapine, or at least exchange their country for one more hospitable than that where they were born.

Thus much I thought it my duty to say to you who are under my care, to warn you against those temporal evils which may draw the worst of spiritual evils after them; such as heart-burnings, murmurings, discontents, and all manner of wickedness, which a desperate condition of life may tempt men to.

I am sensible that what I have now said will not go very far, being confined to this assembly: but I hope it may stir up others of my brethren to exhort their several congregations, after a more effectual manner, to shew their love for their country on this important occasion. And this, I am sure, cannot be called meddling in affairs of state.

I pray God protect his most gracious Majesty, and his kingdom long under his government; and defend us from all ruinous projectors, deceivers,

suborners, perjurers, false accusers, and oppressors; from the virulence of party and faction; and unite us in loyalty to our king, love to our country, and charity to each other.

And this we beg, for Jesus Christ's sake: to whom, &c.

THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.*

—o—

I AM in all opinions to believe according to my own impartial reason; which I am bound to inform and improve, as far as my capacities and opportunities will permit.

It may be prudent in me to act sometimes by other men's reason; but I can think only by my own.

If another man's reason fully convinces me, it becomes my own reason.

To say a man is bound to believe, is neither truth nor sense.

You may force men, by interest or punishment, to say or swear they believe, and to act as if they believed; you can go no farther.

Every man, as a member of the commonwealth, ought to be content with the possession of his own opinion in private, without perplexing his neighbour or disturbing the public.

Violent zeal for truth has a hundred to one odds, to be either petulancy, ambition, or pride.

There is a degree of corruption, wherein some nations, as bad as the world is, will proceed to an

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* See remarks on this treatise, Gent. Mag. vol. xxxv. p. 372.

amendment; till which time, particular men should be quiet.

To remove opinions fundamental in religion, is impossible, and the attempt wicked, whether those opinions be true or false; unless your avowed design be to abolish that religion altogether. So, for instance, in the famous doctrine of Christ's divinity, which has been universally received by all bodies of Christians, since the condemnation of Arianism under Constantine, and his successors; wherefore the proceedings of the Socinians are both vain and unwarrantable; because they will never be able to advance their own opinion, or meet any other success than breeding doubts and disturbances in the world—*Qui ratione suâ disturbant mœnia mundi.*

The want of belief is a defect that ought to be concealed, when it cannot be overcome.

The Christian religion, in the most early times, was proposed to the Jews and heathens without the article of Christ's divinity; which I remember, Erasmus accounts for, by its being too strong a meat for babes. Perhaps, if it were now softened by the Chinese missionaries, the conversion of those infidels would be less difficult; and we find, by the Alcoran, it is the great stumblingblock of the Mahometans. But, in a country already Christian, to bring so fundamental a point of faith into debate, can have no consequences that are not pernicious to morals and public peace.

I have been often offended to find St. Paul's allegories, and other figures of Grecian eloquence, converted by divines into articles of faith.

God's mercy is over all his works; but divines of all sorts lessen that mercy too much.

I look upon myself, in the capacity of a clergyman, to be one appointed by Providence for defend-

ing a post assigned me, and for gaining over as many enemies as I can. Although I think my cause is just, yet one great motive is my submitting to the pleasure of Providence, and to the laws of my country.

I am not answerable to God for the doubts that arise in my own breast, since they are the consequence of that reason which he has planted in me; if I take care to conceal those doubts from others, if I use my best endeavours to subdue them, and if they have no influence on the conduct of my life.

I believe that thousands of men would be orthodox enough in certain points, if divines had not been too curious, or too narrow, in reducing orthodoxy within the compass of subtleties, niceties, and distinctions, with little warrant from Scripture, and less from reason or good policy.

I never saw, heard, nor read, that the clergy were beloved in any nation where Christianity was the religion of the country. Nothing can render them popular, but some degree of persecution.

Those fine gentlemen, who affect the humour of railing at the clergy, are, I think, bound in honour to turn parsons themselves, and shew us better examples.

Miserable mortals! can we contribute to the honour and glory of God? I could wish that expression were struck out of our Prayer-books.

Liberty of conscience, properly speaking, is no more than the liberty of possessing our own thoughts and opinions, which every man enjoys, without fear of the magistrate; but how far he shall publicly act in pursuance of those opinions is to be regulated by the laws of the country. Perhaps, in my own thoughts, I prefer a well-instituted commonwealth before a monarchy; and I know several others of the same opinion. Now, if, upon this pretence, I

should insist upon liberty of conscience, form conventicles of republicans, and print books preferring that government, and condemning what is established, the magistrate would, with great justice, hang me and my disciples. It is the same case in religion, although not so avowed; where liberty of conscience, under the present acceptation, equally produces revolutions, or at least convulsions and disturbances, in a state; which politicians would see well enough, if their eyes were not blinded by faction, and of which these kingdoms, as well as France, Sweden, and other countries, are flaming instances. Cromwell's notion upon that article was natural and right; when, upon the surrender of a town in Ireland, the Popish governor insisted upon an article for liberty of conscience. Cromwell said, "He meddled with no man's conscience; but if, by liberty of conscience, the governor meant the liberty of the mass, he had express orders from the Parliament of England against admitting any such liberty at all."

It is impossible that anything so natural, so necessary, and so universal as death, should ever have been designed by Providence as an evil to mankind.

Although reason were intended by Providence to govern our passions, yet it seems that in two points of the greatest moment to the being and continuance of the world, God has intended our passions to prevail over reason. The first is, the propagation of our species; since no wise man ever married from the dictates of reason. The other is, the love of life; which, from the dictates of reason, every man would despise, and wish it at an end, or that it never had a beginning.

FURTHER THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION.

—o—

THE Scripture system of man's creation is what Christians are bound to believe, and seems most agreeable of all others to probability and reason. Adam was formed from a piece of clay, and Eve from one of his ribs. The text mentioneth nothing of his Maker's intending him for, except to rule over the beasts of the field and birds of the air. As to Eve, it doth not appear that her husband was her monarch; only she was to be his helpmate, and placed in some degree of subjection. However, before his fall, the beasts were his most obedient subjects, whom he governed by absolute power. After his eating the forbidden fruit, the course of nature was changed; the animals began to reject his government; some were able to escape by flight, and others were too fierce to be attacked. The Scripture mentioneth no particular acts of royalty in Adam over his posterity who were contemporary with him, or of any monarch until after the flood; whereof the first was Nimrod, the mighty

hunter, who, as Milton expresseth it, made men, and not beasts, his prey; for men were easier caught by promises, and subdued by the folly or treachery of their own species; whereas the brutes prevailed only by their courage or strength, which, among them, are peculiar to certain kinds. Lions, bears, elephants, and some other animals, are strong or valiant; and their species never degenerates in their native soil, except they happen to be enslaved or destroyed by human fraud; but men degenerate every day, merely by the folly, the perverseness, the avarice, the tyranny, the pride, the treachery, or inhumanity, of their own kind.

TRACTS

IN

DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AN ARGUMENT

TO PROVE THAT THE ABOLISHING OF

CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND

MAY, AS THINGS NOW STAND,

BE ATTENDED WITH SOME INCONVENIENCES, AND

PERHAPS NOT PRODUCE THOSE MANY GOOD

EFFECTS PROPOSED THEREBY.*

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708.

—o—

I AM very sensible, what a weakness and presumption it is, to reason against the general humour and disposition of the world. I remember it was, with great justice, and due regard to the freedom both of the public and the press, forbidden, upon

* This admirable specimen of Swift's peculiar humour, is one of the most felicitous efforts in our language to engage wit and humour on the side of religion. The author himself considered it as particularly levelled against the latitudinarian principles adopted by the Low Church party, with whom he was himself at that time united in temporal politics. But there is no occasion, nor, perhaps, much propriety, in narrowing the application of a satire, which too faithfully embraces the greater part of all parties, in all ages.

several penalties, to write, or discourse, or lay wagers against the Union, even before it was confirmed by parliament; because that was looked upon as a design to oppose the current of the people, which, beside the folly of it, is a manifest breach of the fundamental law, that makes this majority of opinion the voice of God. In like manner, and for the very same reasons, it may perhaps be neither safe nor prudent, to argue against the abolishing of Christianity, at a juncture when all parties appear so unanimously determined upon the point, as we cannot but allow from their actions, their discourses, and their writings. However, I know not how, whether from the affectation of singularity, or the perverseness of human nature, but so it unhappily falls out, that I cannot be entirely of this opinion. Nay, though I were sure an order were issued for my immediate prosecution by the attorney-general, I should still confess, that in the present posture of our affairs, at home or abroad, I do not yet see the absolute necessity of extirpating the Christian religion among us.

This perhaps may appear too great a paradox, even for our wise and paradoxical age to endure; therefore I shall handle it with all tenderness, and with the utmost deference to that great and profound majority which is of another sentiment.

And yet the curious may please to observe, how much the genius of a nation is liable to alter in half an age: I have heard it affirmed for certain, by some very old people, that the contrary opinion was, even in their memories, as much in vogue as the other is now; and that a project for the abolishing of Christianity would then have appeared as singular, and been thought as absurd, as it would be, at this time, to write or discourse in its defence.

Therefore I freely own, that all appearances are

against me. The system of the gospel, after the fate of other systems, is generally antiquated and exploded; and the mass or body of the common people, among whom it seems to have had its latest credit, are now grown as much ashamed of it as their betters; opinions, like fashions, always descending from those of quality to the middle sort, and thence to the vulgar, where at length they are dropped and vanish.

5 But here I would not be mistaken, and must therefore be so bold as to borrow a distinction from the writers on the other side, when they make a difference between nominal and real Trinitarians. I hope no reader imagines me so weak to stand up in the defence of real Christianity, such as used, in primitive times, (if we may believe the authors of those ages,) to have an influence upon men's belief and actions: to offer at the restoring of that, would indeed be a wild project; it would be to dig up foundations; to destroy, at one blow, all the wit, and half the learning, of the kingdom; to break the entire frame and constitution of things; to ruin trade, extinguish arts and sciences, with the professors of them; in short, to turn our courts, exchanges, and shops, into deserts; and would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace, where he advises the Romans, all in a body, to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world, by way of cure for the corruption of their manners.

6 Therefore I think this caution was in itself altogether unnecessary, (which I have inserted only to prevent all possibility of cavilling,) since every candid reader will easily understand my discourse to be intended only in defence of nominal Christianity; the other having been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent, as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power.

7 But why we should therefore cast off the name and title of Christians, although the general opinion and resolution be so violent for it, I confess I cannot (with submission) apprehend, nor is the consequence necessary. However, since the undertakers propose such wonderful advantages to the nation by this project, and advance many plausible objections against the system of Christianity, I shall briefly consider the strength of both, fairly allow them their greatest weight, and offer such answers as I think most reasonable. After which I will beg leave to shew, what inconveniences may possibly happen by such an innovation, in the present posture of our affairs.

8 First, one great advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity, is, that it would very much enlarge and establish liberty of conscience, that great bulwark of our nation, and of the Protestant religion; which is still too much limited by priestcraft, notwithstanding all the good intentions of the legislature, as we have lately found by a severe instance. For it is confidently reported, that two young gentlemen of real hopes, bright wit, and profound judgment, who, upon a thorough examination of causes and effects, and by the mere force of natural abilities, without the least tincture of learning, having made a discovery that there was no God, and generously communicating their thoughts for the good of the public, were some time ago, by an unparalleled severity, and upon I know not what obsolete law, broke for blasphemy. And as it has been wisely observed, if persecution once begins, no man alive knows how far it may reach, or where it will end.

9 In answer to all which, with deference to wiser judgments, I think this rather shews the necessity of a nominal religion among us. Great wits love to be free with the highest objects; and if they cannot

be allowed a God to revile or renounce, they will speak evil of dignities, abuse the government, and reflect upon the ministry; which I am sure few will deny to be of much more pernicious consequence, according to the saying of Tiberius, *deorum offensa diis curæ.* As to the particular fact related, I think it is not fair to argue from one instance, perhaps another cannot be produced: yet (to the comfort of all those who may be apprehensive of persecution) blasphemy, we know, is freely spoken a million of times in every coffeehouse and tavern, or wherever else good company meet. It must be allowed, indeed, that to break an English free-born officer, only for blasphemy, was, to speak the gentlest of such an action, a very high strain of absolute power. Little can be said in excuse for the general; perhaps he was afraid it might give offence to the allies, among whom, for aught we know, it may be the custom of the country to believe a God. But if he argued, as some have done, upon a mistaken principle, that an officer who is guilty of speaking blasphemy, may some time or other proceed so far as to raise a mutiny, the consequence is by no means to be admitted; for surely the commander of an English army is likely to be but ill obeyed, whose soldiers fear and reverence him as little as they do a Deity.

10 It is farther objected against the gospel system, that it obliges men to the belief of things too difficult for freethinkers, and such who have shaken off the prejudices that usually cling to a confined education. To which I answer, that men should be cautious how they raise objections, which reflect upon the wisdom of the nation. Is not everybody freely allowed to believe whatever he pleases, and to publish his belief to the world whenever he thinks fit, especially if it serves to strengthen the party

which is in the right? Would any indifferent foreigner, who should read the trumpery lately written by Asgil, Tindal, Toland, Coward, and forty more, imagine the gospel to be our rule of faith, and confirmed by parliaments? Does any man either believe, or say he believes, or desire to have it thought that he says he believes, one syllable of the matter? And is any man worse received upon that score, or does he find his want of nominal faith a disadvantage to him, in the pursuit of any civil or military employment? What if there be an old dormant statute or two against him, are they not now obsolete to a degree, that Epsom and Dudley themselves, if they were now alive, would find it impossible to put them in execution?

"It is likewise urged, that there are, by computation, in this kingdom, above ten thousand parsons, whose revenues, added to those of my lords the bishops, would suffice to maintain at least two hundred young gentlemen of wit and pleasure, and freethinking, enemies to priestcraft, narrow principles, pedantry, and prejudices; who might be an ornament to the court and town: and then again, so great a number of able (bodied) divines might be a recruit to our fleet and armies. This indeed appears to be a consideration of some weight: but then, on the other side, several things deserve to be considered likewise: as first, whether it may not be thought necessary, that in certain tracts of country, like what we call parishes, there shall be one man at least of abilities to read and write. Then it seems a wrong computation, that the revenues of the church throughout this island, would be large enough to maintain two hundred young gentlemen, or even half that number, after the present refined way of living; that is, to allow each of them such a rent, as, in the modern form of speech, would make

them easy. But still there is in this project a greater mischief behind; and we ought to beware of the woman's folly, who killed the hen that every morning laid her a golden egg. For, pray what would become of the race of men in the next age, if we had nothing to trust to beside the scrofulous, consumptive productions, furnished by our men of wit and pleasure, when, having squandered away their vigour, health, and estates, they are forced, by some disagreeable marriage, to piece up their broken fortunes, and entail rottenness and politeness on their posterity? Now, here are ten thousand persons reduced, by the wise regulations of Henry the Eighth, to the necessity of a low diet, and moderate exercise, who are the only great restorers of our breed, without which the nation would, in an age or two, become one great hospital.

12 Another advantage proposed by the abolishing of Christianity, is, the clear gain of one day in seven, which is now entirely lost, and consequently the kingdom one seventh less considerable in trade, business, and pleasure; beside the loss to the public of so many stately structures, now in the hands of the clergy, which might be converted into playhouses, market-houses, exchanges, common dormitories, and other public edifices.

13 I hope I shall be forgiven a hard word, if I call this a perfect *cavil*. I readily own there has been an old custom, time out of mind, for people to assemble in the churches every Sunday, and that shops are still frequently shut, in order, as it is conceived, to preserve the memory of that ancient practice; but how this can prove a hindrance to business or pleasure is hard to imagine. What if the men of pleasure are forced, one day in the week, to game at home instead of the chocolate-houses? are not the taverns and coffee-houses open? can there be a more

convenient season for taking a dose of physic; are fewer claps got upon Sundays than other days? is not that the chief day for traders to sum up the accounts of the week, and for lawyers to prepare their briefs? But I would fain know, how it can be pretended, that the churches are misapplied? where are more appointments and rendezvouses of gallantry? where more care to appear in the foremost box, with greater advantage of dress? where more meetings for business? where more bargains driven of all sorts? and where so many conveniences or enticements to sleep?

¶ There is one advantage, greater than any of the foregoing, proposed by the abolishing of Christianity; that it will utterly extinguish parties among us, by removing those factious distinctions of high and low church, of whig and tory, presbyterian and church of England, which are now so many grievous clogs upon public proceedings, and are apt to dispose men to prefer the gratifying of themselves, or depressing of their adversaries, before the most important interest of the state.

¶ I confess, if it were certain, that so great an advantage would redound to the nation by this expedient, I would submit, and be silent; but will any man say, that if the words *whoring*, *drinking*, *cheating*, *lying*, *stealing*, were, by act of parliament, ejected out of the English tongue and dictionaries, we should all awake next morning chaste and temperate, honest and just, and lovers of truth? Is this a fair consequence? or, if the physicians would forbid us to pronounce the words *pox*, *gout*, *rheumatism*, and *stone*, would that expedient serve, like so many talismans, to destroy the diseases themselves? are party and faction rooted in men's hearts no deeper than phrases borrowed from religion, or founded upon no firmer principles? and is our language so

poor, that we cannot find other terms to express them? are *envy*, *pride*, *avarice*, and *ambition* such ill nomenclators, that they cannot furnish appellations for their owners? will not *heydukes* and *mamalukes*, *mandarins*, and *patshaws*, or any other words formed at pleasure, serve to distinguish those who are in the ministry from others, who would be in it if they could? what, for instance, is easier than to vary the form of speech, and instead of the word church, make it a question in politics, whether the Monument be in danger? because religion was nearest at hand to furnish a few convenient phrases, is our invention so barren, we can find no other? suppose, for argument sake, that the tories favoured Margarita,* the whigs Mrs. Tofts, and the trimmers Valentini; would not *Margaritians*, *Toftians*, and *Valentinians* be very tolerable marks of distinction? the *Prasini* and *Veniti*, two most virulent factions in Italy, began (if I remember right) by a distinction of colours in ribbons; and we might contend with as good a grace about the dignity of the blue and the green, which would serve as properly to divide the court, the parliament, and the kingdom, between them, as any terms of art whatsoever, borrowed from religion. And therefore, I think, there is little force in this objection against Christianity, or prospect of so great an advantage, as is proposed in the abolishing of it.

VIII. It is again objected, as a very absurd, ridiculous custom, that a set of men should be suffered, much less employed and hired, to bawl one day in seven against the lawfulness of those methods most in use, toward the pursuit of greatness, riches, and pleasure, which are the constant practice of all men alive on the other six. But this objection is, I think, a little

* Italian singers then in vogue.

unworthy of so refined an age as ours. Let us argue this matter calmly: I appeal to the breast of any polite freethinker, whether, in the pursuit of gratifying a predominant passion, he has not always felt a wonderful incitement, by reflecting it was a thing forbidden: and, therefore, we see, in order to cultivate this taste, the wisdom of the nation has taken special care, that the ladies should be furnished with prohibited silks, and the men with prohibited wine. And, indeed, it were to be wished, that some other prohibitions were promoted, in order to improve the pleasures of the town; which, for want of such expedients, begin already, as I am told, to flag and grow languid, giving way daily to cruel inroads from the spleen.

17 It is likewise proposed as a great advantage to the public, that if we once discard the system of the gospel, all religion will of course be banished for ever; and consequently, along with it, those grievous prejudices of education, which, under the names of *virtue, conscience, honour, justice*, and the like, are so apt to disturb the peace of human minds, and the notions whereof are so hard to be eradicated, by right reason, or freethinking, sometimes during the whole course of our lives.

18 Here first I observe, how difficult it is to get rid of a phrase, which the world is once grown fond of, though the occasion that first produced it be entirely taken away. For several years past, if a man had but an ill-favoured nose, the deep thinkers of the age would, some way or other, contrive to impute the cause to the prejudice of his education. From this fountain were said to be derived all our foolish notions of justice, piety, love of our country; all our opinions of God, or a future state, heaven, hell, and the like; and there might formerly perhaps have been some pretence for this change. But so effectual

care has been taken to remove those prejudices, by an entire change in the methods of education, that (with honour I mention it to our polite innovators) the young gentlemen, who are now on the scene, seem to have not the least tincture of those infusions, or string of those weeds: and, by consequence, the reason for abolishing nominal Christianity upon that pretext, is wholly ceased.

For the rest, it may perhaps admit a controversy, whether the banishing of all notions of religion, whatsoever, would be convenient for the vulgar. Not that I am in the least of opinion with those, who hold religion to have been the invention of politicians, to keep the lower part of the world in awe, by the fear of invisible powers; unless mankind were then very different to what it is now: for I look upon the mass or body of our people here in England, to be as freethinkers, that is to say, as staunch unbelievers, as any of the highest rank. But I conceive some scattered notions about a superior power, to be of singular use for the common people, as furnishing excellent materials to keep children quiet when they grow peevish, and providing topics of amusement in a tedious winter night.

Lastly, it is proposed, as a singular advantage, that the abolishing of Christianity will very much contribute to the uniting of Protestants, by enlarging the terms of communion, so as to take in all sorts of dissenters, who are now shut out of the pale, upon account of a few ceremonies, which all sides confess to be things indifferent; that this alone will effectually answer the great ends of a scheme for comprehension, by opening a large noble gate, at which all bodies may enter; whereas the chaffering with dissenters, and dodging about this or the other ceremony, is but like opening a few wickets, and leaving them at jar, by which no more than one can

get in at a time, and that, not without stooping, and sideling, and squeezing his body.*

To all this I answer, that there is one darling inclination of mankind, which usually affects to be a retainer to religion, though she be neither its parent, its godmother, or its friend; I mean the spirit of opposition, that lived long before Christianity, and can easily subsist without it. Let us, for instance, examine wherein the opposition of sectaries among us consists; we shall find Christianity to have no share in it at all. Does the gospel anywhere prescribe a starched, squeezed countenance, a stiff, formal gait, a singularity of manners and habit, or any affected modes of speech, different from the reasonable part of mankind? Yet, if Christianity did not lend its name to stand in the gap, and to employ or divert these humours, they must of necessity be spent in contraventions to the laws of the land, and disturbance of the public peace. There is a portion of enthusiasm assigned to every nation, which, if it has not proper objects to work on, will burst out, and set all in a flame. If the quiet of a state can be bought, by only flinging men a few ceremonies to devour, it is a purchase no wise man would refuse. Let the mastiffs amuse themselves about a sheep's skin stuffed with hay, provided it will keep them from worrying the flock. The institution of convents abroad, seems, in one point, a strain of great wisdom; there being few irregularities in human passions, that may not have recourse to vent themselves in some of those orders,

* In this passage the author's high church principles, and jealousy of the Dissenters, plainly shew themselves; and it is, perhaps, in special reference to what is here said, that he ranks it among the pamphlets which he wrote in opposition to the party then in power.

which are so many retreats for the speculative, the melancholy, the proud, the silent, the politic, and the morose, to spend themselves, and evaporate the noxious particles; for each of whom, we, in this island, are forced to provide a several sect of religion, to keep them quiet: and whenever Christianity shall be abolished, the legislature must find some other expedient to employ and entertain them. For what imports it how large a gate you open, if there will be always left a number, who place a pride and a merit in refusing to enter?

22 Having thus considered the most important objections against Christianity, and the chief advantages proposed by the abolishing thereof, I shall now, with equal deference and submission to wiser judgments, as before, proceed to mention a few inconveniencies that may happen, if the gospel should be repealed, which perhaps the projectors may not have sufficiently considered.

23 And first, I am very sensible how much the gentlemen of wit and pleasure are apt to murmur, and be choked at the sight of so many daggled-tail parsons, who happen to fall in their way, and offend their eyes; but, at the same time, these wise reformers do not consider what an advantage and felicity it is for great wits to be always provided with objects of scorn and contempt, in order to exercise and improve their talents, and divert their spleen from falling on each other, or on themselves; especially when all this may be done, without the least imaginable danger to their persons.

24 And to urge another argument of a parallel nature: if Christianity were once abolished, how could the freethinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning, be able to find another subject, so calculated in all points, whereon to display their abilities? what wonderful produc-

tions of wit should we be deprived of, from those whose genius, by continual practice, has been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine or distinguish themselves upon any other subject! we are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would we take away the greatest, perhaps the only, topic we have left? who would ever have suspected Asgil for a wit, or Toland for a philosopher, if the inexhaustible stock of Christianity had not been at hand, to provide them with materials? what other subject, through all art or nature, could have produced Tindal for a profound author, or furnished him with readers? it is the wise choice of the subject, that alone adorns and distinguishes the writer. For had a hundred such pens as these been employed on the side of religion, they would have immediately sunk into silence and oblivion.

15 Nor do I think it wholly groundless, or my fears altogether imaginary, that the abolishing Christianity may perhaps bring the church into danger, or at least put the senate to the trouble of another securing vote. I desire I may not be mistaken; I am far from presuming to affirm, or think, that the church is in danger at present, or as things now stand; but we know not how soon it may be so, when the Christian religion is repealed. As plausible as this project seems, there may be a dangerous design lurking under it. Nothing can be more notorious, than that the Atheists, Deists, Socinians, Anti-trinitarians, and other subdivisions of free-thinkers, are persons of little zeal for the present ecclesiastical establishment: their declared opinion is for repealing the sacramental test; they are very indifferent with regard to ceremonies; nor do they hold the *jus divinum* of episcopacy; therefore this

may be intended as one politic step toward altering the constitution of the church established, and setting up presbytery in the stead, which I leave to be farther considered by those at the helm.

24 In the last place, I think nothing can be more plain, than that, by this expedient, we shall run into the evil we chiefly pretend to avoid: and that the abolishment of the Christian religion will be the readiest course we can take to introduce popery. And I am the more inclined to this opinion, because we know it has been the constant practice of the jesuits, to send over emissaries, with instructions to personate themselves members of the several prevailing sects among us. So it is recorded, that they have at sundry times appeared in the disguise of Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Independents, and Quakers, according as any of these were most in credit; so, since the fashion has been taken up of exploding religion, the popish missionaries have not been wanting to mix with the freethinkers; among whom Toland, the great oracle of the Antichristians, is an Irish priest, the son of an Irish priest; and the most learned and ingenious author of a book, called "The Rights of the Christian Church," was in a proper juncture reconciled to the Romish faith, whose true son, as appears by a hundred passages in his treatise, he still continues. Perhaps I could add some others to the number; but the fact is beyond dispute, and the reasoning they proceed by is right: for, supposing Christianity to be extinguished, the people will never be at ease till they find out some other method of worship; which will as infallibly produce superstition, as superstition will end in popery.

25 And therefore, if, notwithstanding all I have said, it still be thought necessary to have a bill brought in for repealing Christianity, I would humbly offer

an amendment, that instead of the word Christianity, may be put religion in general; which, I conceive, will much better answer all the good ends proposed by the projectors of it. For, as long as we leave in being a God and his providence, with all the necessary consequences which curious and inquisitive men will be apt to draw from such premises, we do not strike at the root of the evil, though we should ever so effectually annihilate the present scheme of the gospel: for of what use is freedom of thought if it will not produce freedom of action? which is the sole end, how remote soever in appearance, of all objections against Christianity; and therefore, the freethinkers consider it as a sort of edifice, wherein all the parts have such a mutual dependence on each other, that if you happen to pull out one single nail, the whole fabric must fall to the ground. This was happily expressed by him, who had heard of a text brought for proof of the Trinity, which in an ancient manuscript was differently read; he thereupon immediately took the hint, and by a sudden deduction of a long *sorites*, most logically concluded; "Why, if it be as you say, I may safely whore and drink on, and defy the parson." From which, and many the like instances easy to be produced, I think nothing can be more manifest, than that the quarrel is not against any particular points of hard digestion in the Christian system, but against religion in general; which, by laying restraints on human nature, is supposed the great enemy to the freedom of thought and action.

Upon the whole, if it shall still be thought for the benefit of church and state, that Christianity be abolished, I conceive, however, it may be more convenient to defer the execution to a time of peace: and not venture, in this conjuncture, to disoblige our allies, who, as it falls out, are all Christians, and

many of them, by the prejudices of their education, so bigoted, as to place a sort of pride in the appellation. If upon being rejected by them, we are to trust an alliance with the Turk, we shall find ourselves much deceived: for, as he is too remote, and generally engaged in war with the Persian emperor, so his people would be more scandalized at our infidelity than our Christian neighbours. For the Turks are not only strict observers of religious worship, but, what is worse, believe a God; which is more than is required of us, even while we preserve the name of Christians.

To conclude: whatever some may think of the great advantages to trade by this favourite scheme, I do very much apprehend, that in six months' time after the act is passed for the extirpation of the gospel, the Bank and East-India stock may fall at least one *per cent.* And since that is fifty times more than ever the wisdom of our age thought fit to venture, for the preservation of Christianity, there is no reason we should be at so great a loss, merely for the sake of destroying it.

A PROJECT

FOR THE

ADVANCEMENT OF RELIGION,

AND THE

REFORMATION OF MANNERS.*

O siquis volet impias
Cædes, et rabiem tollere civicam:
Si quæret pater urbium
Subscribi statuis, indomitam audeat
Refrænare licentiam. HOR. Lib. III. Od. 24.

BY A PERSON OF QUALITY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1709.

—o—

TO THE COUNTESS OF BERKELEY.

MADAM,

MY intention of prefixing your ladyship's name is not, after the common form, to desire your protection of the following papers, which I take to be a very unreasonable request; since, by being inscribed to your ladyship, though without your

* This treatise was written about 1709, when Swift was chaplain in the family of Lord Berkeley. The praises bestowed upon his

knowledge, and from a concealed hand, you cannot recommend them without some suspicion of partiality. My real design is, I confess, the very same I have often detested in most dedications; that of publishing your praises to the world; not upon the subject of your noble birth, for I know others as noble; or of the greatness of your fortune, for I know others far greater; or of that beautiful race (the images of their parents) which call you mother;

Countess, to whom it is inscribed, are said to have been as well merited as happily and elegantly expressed. Swift continued to entertain a profound respect for Lady Berkeley, long after he had quarrelled with the Earl. In after-life our author loved to have this tract accounted a strong but covered attack upon the Whig administration, and accordingly his biographer, Mr. Sheridan, contends at great length, that, by recommending to the Queen a reformation of manners, Swift chiefly meant to insinuate a change of administration; and by advising, that she should call around her person, and to her councils, those who had the cause of religion at heart, he meant that she should choose her officers and ministers from the Tories and High-Church men. It is no doubt true, that Swift, while he was disposed to be a Whig in politics, considered himself always as a High-Church man in religion; and many passages of this treatise may be considered as particularly affecting that party by whom the clergy were held in general and almost systematic contempt. But in this, as in the preceding treatise, the evils pointed out are too general to be imputed as the exclusive attributes of any one party, and I cannot be easily convinced, that so excellent a moral essay was written with a view merely political; or that Swift, who at this time had no connection with the Tories, was endeavouring, without motive, to undermine the administration of Halifax, Somers, and Godolphin, with whom he was living on terms of friendship, at least, if not of expectancy and dependence.

As to the merits of the Project, it must be allowed, that the author has been more successful in pointing out the extent of the evil, than in suggesting remedies. The idea of a religious administration and court borders on the visionary; and the plan of censors and itinerant commissioners for the inspection of morals, could hardly be tolerated in a free country. Yet the minor branches of the Project might be successfully adopted. The reformation of the stage, (since happily perfected,) the exclusion

for even this may perhaps have been equalled in some other age or country. Besides, none of these advantages do derive any accomplishments to the owners, but serve at best only to adorn what they really possess. What I intend is, your piety, truth, good sense, and good nature, affability, and charity; wherein I wish your ladyship had many equals, or any superiors; and I wish I could say, I knew them too, for then your ladyship might have had a chance to escape this address. In the meantime, I think it highly necessary, for the interest of virtue and religion, that the whole kingdom should be informed in some parts of your character: for instance, that the easiest and politest conversation, joined with the truest piety, may be observed in your ladyship, in as great perfection as they were ever seen apart in any other persons. That by your prudence and management under several disadvantages, you have preserved the lustre of that

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of openly vicious characters from the presence of the sovereign, the more selected choice of justices of peace, the reviving discipline in schools, colleges, and inns of court, above all, the exertions of the clergy in a cause peculiarly their own, are sound practical remedies in an age of prevailing and general depravity.

Steele, then an intimate friend of the author, thus distinguished the treatise in the fifth number of the Tatler. "The title was so uncommon, and promised so peculiar a way of thinking, that every man here has read it, and as many as have done so have approved it. It is written with the spirit of one who has seen the world enough to undervalue it with good-breeding. The author must certainly be a man of wisdom as well as piety, and have spent much time in the exercise of both. The real causes of the decay of the interest of religion are set forth in a clear and lively manner, without unseasonable passions; and the whole air of the book, as to the language, the sentiments, and the reasonings, shews it was written by one whose virtue sits easy about him, and to whom vice is thoroughly contemptible. It was said by one in company, alluding to that knowledge of the world this author seems to have, 'The man writes much like a gentleman, and goes to heaven with a very good mien.'"

most noble family into which you are grafted, and which the unmeasurable profusion of ancestors, for many generations, had too much eclipsed. Then, how happily you perform every office of life to which Providence has called you: in the education of those two incomparable daughters, whose conduct is so universally admired; in every duty of a prudent, complying, affectionate wife; in that care which descends to the meanest of your domestics; and, lastly, in that endless bounty to the poor, and discretion where to distribute it. I insist on my opinion, that it is of importance for the public to know this and a great deal more of your ladyship; yet whoever goes about to inform them, shall, instead of finding credit, perhaps be censured for a flatterer. To avoid so usual a reproach, I declare this to be no dedication, but merely an introduction to a proposal for the advancement of religion and morals, by tracing, however imperfectly, some few lineaments in the character of a lady who has spent all her life in the practice and promotion of both.

AMONG all the schemes offered to the public in this projecting age, I have observed with some displeasure, that there have never been any for the improvement of religion and morals; which, beside the piety of the design, from the consequence of such a reformation in a future life, would be the best natural means for advancing the public felicity of the state, as well as the present happiness of every individual. For, as much as faith and morality are declined among us, I am altogether confident, they might in a short time, and with no very great trouble, be raised to as high a perfection as numbers are

capable of receiving. Indeed, the method is so easy and obvious, and some present opportunities so good, that, in order to have this project reduced to practice, there seems to want nothing more than to put those in mind, who by their honour, duty, and interest, are chiefly concerned.

But because it is idle to propose remedies, before we are assured of the disease, or to be in fear, till we are convinced of the danger, I shall first shew in general, that the nation is extremely corrupted in religion and morals; and then I will offer a short scheme for the reformation of both.

As to the first, I know it is reckoned but a form of speech, when divines complain of the wickedness of the age: however, I believe, upon a fair comparison with other times and countries, it would be found an undoubted truth.

For, first, to deliver nothing but plain matter of fact without exaggeration or satire, I suppose it will be granted that hardly one in a hundred among our people of quality or gentry, appears to act by any principle of religion; that great numbers of them do entirely discard it, and are ready to own their disbelief of all revelation in ordinary discourse. Nor is the case much better among the vulgar, especially in great towns, where the profaneness and ignorance of handicraftsmen, small traders, servants, and the like, are to a degree very hard to be imagined greater. Then, it is observed abroad, that no race of mortals have so little sense of religion as the English soldiers; to confirm which, I have been often told by great officers of the army, that in the whole compass of their acquaintance, they could not recollect three of their profession who seemed to regard or believe one syllable of the gospel; and the same, at least, may be affirmed of the fleet. The consequences of all which upon the actions of men

are equally manifest. They never go about, as in former times, to hide or palliate their vices, but expose them freely to view, like any other common occurrences of life, without the least reproach from the world, or themselves. For instance, any man will tell you he intends to be drunk this evening, or was so last night, with as little ceremony or scruple as he would tell you the time of the day. He will let you know he is going to a wench, or that he has got the venereal disease, with as much indifferency as he would a piece of public news. He will swear, curse, or blaspheme, without the least passion or provocation. And though all regard for reputation is not quite laid aside in the other sex, it is, however, at so low an ebb that very few among them seem to think virtue and conduct of absolute necessity for preserving it. If this be not so, how comes it to pass that women of tainted reputations find the same countenance and reception in all public places with those of the nicest virtue, who pay and receive visits from them, without any manner of scruple? which proceeding, as it is not very old among us, so I take it to be of most pernicious consequence: it looks like a sort of compounding between virtue and vice, as if a woman were allowed to be vicious, provided she be not a profligate; as if there were a certain point, where gallantry ends, and infamy begins; or that a hundred criminal amours were not as pardonable as half a score.

Besides those corruptions already mentioned, it would be endless to enumerate such as arise from the excess of play or gaming: the cheats, the quarrels, the oaths, and blasphemies, among the men; among the women, the neglect of household affairs, the unlimited freedoms, the indecent passion, and lastly, the known inlet to all lewdness, when, after an ill run, the person must answer the defects

of the purse; the rule on such occasions holding true in play, as it does in law, *quod non habet in crumena, luat in corpore.*

But all these are trifles in comparison, if we step into other scenes, and consider the fraud and cozenage of trading men and shopkeepers; that insatiable gulf of injustice and oppression, the law; the open traffic for all civil and military employments, (I wish it rested there,) without the least regard to merit or qualifications; the corrupt management of men in office; the many detestable abuses in choosing those who represent the people; with the management of interest and factions among the representatives: to which I must be bold to add, the ignorance of some of the lower clergy; the mean, servile temper of others; the pert, pragmatical demeanour of several young stagers in divinity, upon their first producing themselves into the world; with many other circumstances, needless, or rather invidious, to mention; which falling in with the corruptions already related, have, however unjustly, almost rendered the whole order contemptible.

This is a short view of the general depravities among us, without entering into particulars, which would be an endless labour. Now, as universal and deep-rooted as these appear to be, I am utterly deceived, if an effectual remedy might not be applied to most of them; neither am I at present upon a wild speculative project, but such a one as may be easily put in execution.

For while the prerogative of giving all employments continues in the Crown, either immediately, or by subordination, it is in the power of the prince to make piety and virtue become the fashion of the age, if, at the same time, he would make them necessary qualifications for favour and preferment.

It is clear, from present experience, that the bare

example of the best prince will not have any mighty influence, where the age is very corrupt. For, when was there ever a better prince on the throne than the present Queen? I do not talk of her talent for government, her love of the people, or any other qualities that are purely regal; but her piety, charity, temperance, conjugal love, and whatever other virtues do best adorn a private life; wherein, without question or flattery, she has no superior: yet, neither will it be satire or peevish invective to affirm, that infidelity and vice are not much diminished since her coming to the crown, nor will, in all probability, till more effectual remedies be provided.

Thus human nature seems to lie under the disadvantage, that the example alone of a vicious prince will, in time, corrupt an age; but the example of a good one will not be sufficient to reform it without farther endeavours. Princes must therefore supply this defect by a vigorous exercise of that authority, which the law has left them, by making it every man's interest and honour to cultivate religion and virtue; by rendering vice a disgrace, and the certain ruin to preferment or pretensions: all which they should first attempt in their own courts and families. For instance, might not the Queen's domestics of the middle and lower sort, be obliged, upon penalty of suspension, or loss of their employments, to a constant weekly attendance, at least, on the service of the church; to a decent behaviour in it: to receive the sacrament four times in the year; to avoid swearing and irreligious profane discourses; and, to the appearance, at least, of temperance and chastity? Might not the care of all this be committed to the strict inspection of proper officers? Might not those of higher rank, and nearer access to her Majesty's person, receive her own commands to the same pur-

pose, and be countenanced, or disfavoured, according as they obey? Might not the Queen lay her injunctions on the bishops, and other great men of undoubted piety, to make diligent inquiry, and give her notice, if any person about her should happen to be of libertine principles or morals? Might not all those who enter upon any office in her Majesty's family, be obliged to take an oath parallel with that against simony, which is administered to the clergy? It is not to be doubted, but that if these, or the like proceedings, were duly observed, morality and religion would soon become fashionable court virtues, and be taken up as the only methods to get or keep employments there; which alone would have mighty influence upon many of the nobility and principal gentry.

But if the like methods were pursued as far as possible with regard to those who are in the great employments of state, it is hard to conceive how general a reformation they might in time produce among us. For if piety and virtue were once reckoned qualifications necessary to preferment, every man thus endowed, when put into great stations, would readily imitate the Queen's example, in the distribution of all offices in his disposal; especially if any apparent transgression, through favour or partiality, would be imputed to him for a misdemeanour, by which he must certainly forfeit his favour and station: and there being such great numbers in employment, scattered through every town and county in this kingdom, if all these were exemplary in the conduct of their lives, things would soon take a new face, and religion receive a mighty encouragement: nor would the public weal be less advanced; since, of nine offices in ten that are ill executed, the defect is not in capacity or understanding, but in common honesty. I know no

employment for which piety disqualifies any man; and if it did, I doubt the objection would not be very seasonably offered at present; because it is perhaps too just a reflection, that in the disposal of places, the question whether a person be fit for what he is recommended to, is generally the last that is thought on or regarded.

I have often imagined, that something parallel to the office of censors anciently in Rome, would be of mighty use among us, and could be easily limited from running into any exorbitances. The Romans understood liberty at least as well as we, were as jealous of it, and upon every occasion as bold assertors. Yet I do not remember to have read any great complaint of the abuses in that office among them; but many admirable effects of it are left upon record. There are several pernicious vices frequent and notorious among us, that escape or elude the punishment of any law we have yet invented, or have had no law at all against them; such as atheism, drunkenness, fraud, avarice, and several others; which, by this institution, wisely regulated, might be much reformed. Suppose, for instance, that itinerary commissioners were appointed to inspect everywhere throughout the kingdom, into the conduct, at least of men in office, with respect to their morals and religion, as well as their abilities; to receive the complaints and informations that should be offered against them, and make their report here upon oath to the court, or the ministry, who should reward or punish accordingly. I avoid entering into the particulars of this, or any other scheme, which, coming from a private hand, might be liable to many defects, but would soon be digested by the wisdom of the nation; and surely, six thousand pounds a-year would not be ill laid out among as many commissioners duly qualified, who, in three divisions,

should be personally obliged to take their yearly circuits for that purpose.

But this is beside my present design, which was only to shew what degree of reformation is in the power of the Queen, without the interposition of the legislature, and which her Majesty is, without question, obliged in conscience to endeavour by her authority, as much as she does by her practice.

It will be easily granted, that the example of this great town has a mighty influence over the whole kingdom; and it is as manifest, that the town is equally influenced by the court and the ministry, and those who, by their employments, or their hopes, depend upon them. Now, if under so excellent a princess as the present Queen, we would suppose a family strictly regulated, as I have above proposed; a ministry, where every single person was of distinguished piety; if we should suppose all great offices of state and law filled after the same manner, and with such as were equally diligent in choosing persons, who, in their several subordinations, would be obliged to follow the examples of their superiors under the penalty of loss of favour and place, will not everybody grant, that the empire of vice and irreligion would be soon destroyed in this great metropolis, and receive a terrible blow through the whole island, which has so great an intercourse with it, and so much affects to follow its fashions?

For, if religion were once understood to be the necessary step to favour and preferment, can it be imagined that any man would openly offend against it, who had the least regard for his reputation or his fortune? There is no quality so contrary to any nature, which men cannot affect, and put on upon occasion, in order to serve an interest, or gratify a prevailing passion. The proudest man will personate humility, the morosest learn to flatter, the

laziest will be sedulous and active, where he is in pursuit of what he has much at heart: How ready, therefore, would most men be to step into the paths of virtue and piety, if they infallibly led to favour and fortune!

If swearing and profaneness, scandalous and avowed lewdness, excessive gaming and intemperance, were a little discountenanced in the army, I cannot readily see what ill consequences could be apprehended. If gentlemen of that profession were at least obliged to some external decorum in their conduct, or even if a profligate life and character were not a means of advancement, and the appearance of piety a most infallible hindrance, it is impossible the corruptions there should be so universal and exorbitant. I have been assured by several great officers, that no troops abroad are so ill disciplined as the English; which cannot well be otherwise, while the common soldiers have perpetually before their eyes the vicious example of their leaders; and it is hardly possible for those to commit any crime, whereof these are not infinitely more guilty, and with less temptation.

It is commonly charged upon the gentlemen of the army, that the beastly vice of drinking to excess has been lately, from their example, restored among us; which for some years before was almost dropped in England. But whoever the introducers were, they have succeeded to a miracle: many of the young nobility and gentry are already become great proficients, and are under no manner of concern to hide their talent, but are got beyond all sense of shame, or fear of reproach.

This might soon be remedied, if the Queen would think fit to declare, that no young person of quality whatsoever, who was notoriously addicted to that, or any other vice, should be capable of her favour, or

even admitted into her presence, with positive command to her ministers, and others in great office, to treat them in the same manner; after which, all men, who had any regard for their reputation, or any prospect of preferment, would avoid their commerce. This would quickly make that vice so scandalous, that those who could not subdue, would at least endeavour to disguise it.

By the like methods, a stop might be put to that ruinous practice of deep gaming; and the reason why it prevails so much is, because a treatment, directly opposite in every point, is made use of to promote it; by which means the laws enacted against this abuse are wholly eluded.

It cannot be denied, that the want of strict discipline in the universities has been of pernicious consequence to the youth of this nation, who are there almost left entirely to their own management, especially those among them of better quality and fortune; who, because they are not under a necessity of making learning their maintenance, are easily allowed to pass their time, and take their degrees, with little or no improvement; than which there cannot well be a greater absurdity. For, if no advancement of knowledge can be had from those places, the time there spent is at best utterly lost, because every ornamental part of education is better taught elsewhere: and as for keeping youths out of harm's way, I doubt, where so many of them are got together, at full liberty of doing what they please, it will not answer the end. But whatever abuses, corruptions, or deviations from statutes, have crept into the universities through neglect, or length of time, they might in a great degree be reformed, by strict injunctions from court (upon each particular) to the visitors and heads of houses; beside the peculiar authority the Queen may have in several

colleges, whereof her predecessors were the founders. And among other regulations, it would be very convenient to prevent the excess of drinking; with that scurvy custom among the lads, and parent of the former vice, the taking of tobacco, where it is not absolutely necessary in point of health.

From the universities, the young nobility, and others of great fortunes, are sent for early up to town, for fear of contracting any airs of pedantry, by a college education. Many of the younger gentry retire to the inns of court, where they are wholly left to their own discretion. And the consequence of this remissness in education appears, by observing that nine in ten of those who rise in the church or the court, the law, or the army, are younger brothers, or new men, whose narrow fortunes have forced them upon industry and application.

As for the inns of court, unless we suppose them to be much degenerated, they must needs be the worst instituted seminaries in any Christian country; but whether they may be corrected without interposition of the legislature, I have not skill enough to determine. However, it is certain, that all wise nations have agreed in the necessity of a strict education, which consisted, among other things, in the observance of moral duties, especially justice, temperance, and chastity, as well as the knowledge of arts, and bodily exercises: but all these among us are laughed out of doors.

Without the least intention to offend the clergy, I cannot but think, that through a mistaken notion and practice, they prevent themselves from doing much service, which otherwise might lie in their power, to religion and virtue: I mean, by affecting so much to converse with each other, and caring so little to mingle with the laity. They have their particular clubs, and particular coffee-houses, where they gene-

rally appear in clusters: a single divine dares hardly shew his person among numbers of fine gentlemen; or if he happens to fall into such company, he is silent and suspicious, in continual apprehension that some pert man of pleasure should break an unmannerly jest, and render him ridiculous. Now, I take this behaviour of the clergy to be just as reasonable as if the physicians should agree to spend their time in visiting one another, or their several apothecaries, and leave their patients to shift for themselves. In my humble opinion, the clergy's business lies entirely among the laity; neither is there, perhaps, a more effectual way to forward the salvation of men's souls, than for spiritual persons to make themselves as agreeable as they can, in the conversations of the world; for which a learned education gives them great advantage, if they would please to improve and apply it. It so happens that the men of pleasure, who never go to church, nor use themselves to read books of devotion, form their ideas of the clergy from a few poor strollers they often observe in the streets, or sneaking out of some person of quality's house, where they are hired by the lady at ten shillings a month; while those of better figure and parts, do seldom appear to correct these notions. And let some reasoners think what they please, it is certain that men must be brought to esteem and love the clergy, before they can be persuaded to be in love with religion. No man values the best medicine, if administered by a physician, whose person he hates or despises. If the clergy were as forward to appear in all companies as other gentlemen, and would a little study the arts of conversation to make themselves agreeable, they might be welcomed at every party where there was the least regard for politeness or good sense: and consequently prevent a thousand vicious or profane

discourses, as well as actions; neither would men of understanding complain, that a clergyman was a constraint upon the company, because they could not speak blasphemy, or obscene jests before him. While the people are so jealous of the clergy's ambition, as to abhor all thoughts of the return of ecclesiastic discipline among them, I do not see any other method left for men of that function to take, in order to reform the world, than by using all honest arts to make themselves acceptable to the laity. This, no doubt, is part of that wisdom of the serpent, which the author of Christianity directs, and is the very method used by St. Paul, who became all things to all men, to the Jews a Jew, and a Greek to the Greeks.

How to remedy these inconveniences may be a matter of some difficulty; since the clergy seem to be of an opinion, that this humour of sequestering themselves is a part of their duty; nay, as I remember, they have been told so by some of their bishops in their pastoral letters, particularly by one * among them of great merit and distinction, who yet, in his own practice, has all his lifetime taken a course directly contrary. But I am deceived, if an awkward shame and fear of ill usage from the laity have not a greater share in this mistaken conduct than their own inclinations: however, if the outward profession of religion and virtue were once in practice and countenance at court, as well as among all men in office, or who have any hopes or dependence for preferment, a good treatment of the clergy would be the necessary consequence of such a reformation; and they would soon be wise enough to see their own duty and interest in qualifying themselves for lay-conversation, when once they

* Dr. Burnet, bishop of Salisbury.

were out of fear of being choked by ribaldry or profaneness.

There is one farther circumstance upon this occasion, which I know not whether it will be very orthodox to mention: the clergy are the only set of men among us who constantly wear a distinct habit from others; the consequence of which (not in reason but in fact) is this, that as long as any scandalous persons appear in that dress, it will continue in some degree a general mark of contempt. Whoever happens to see a scoundrel in a gown, reeling home at midnight, (a sight neither frequent nor miraculous,) is apt to entertain an ill idea of the whole order, and at the same time to be extremely comforted in his own vices. Some remedy might be put to this, if those straggling gentlemen, who come up to town to seek their fortunes, were fairly dismissed to the West Indies, where there is work enough, and where some better provision should be made for them, than I doubt there is at present. Or, what if no person were allowed to wear the habit, who had not some preferment in the church, or at least some temporal fortune sufficient to keep him out of contempt? though, in my opinion, it were infinitely better, if all the clergy (except the bishops) were permitted to appear like other men of the graver sort, unless at those seasons when they are doing the business of their function.

There is one abuse in this town, which wonderfully contributes to the promotion of vice; that such men are often put into the commission of the peace, whose interest it is, that virtue should be utterly banished from among us; who maintain, or at least enrich themselves, by encouraging the grossest immoralities; to whom all the bawds of the ward pay contribution, for shelter and protection from the laws. Thus these worthy magistrates, instead of

lessening enormities, are the occasion of just twice as much debauchery as there would be without them. For those infamous women are forced upon doubling their work and industry, to answer double charges, of paying the justice, and supporting themselves. Like thieves who escape the gallows, and are let out to steal, in order to discharge the gaoler's fees.

It is not to be questioned, but the Queen and ministry might easily redress this abominable grievance, by enlarging the number of justices of the peace; by endeavouring to choose men of virtuous principles; by admitting none who have not considerable fortunes; perhaps, by receiving into the number some of the most eminent clergy: then, by forcing all of them, upon severe penalties, to act when there is occasion, and not permitting any who are offered to refuse the commission; but in these two last cases, which are very material, I doubt there will be need of the legislature.

The reformation of the stage is entirely in the power of the Queen; and in the consequences it has upon the minds of the younger people, does very well deserve the strictest care. Besides the indecent and profane passages; besides the perpetual turning into ridicule the very function of the priesthood, with other irregularities, in most modern comedies, which have been often objected to them; it is worth observing the distributive justice of the authors, which is constantly applied to the punishment of virtue and the reward of vice; directly opposite to the rules of their best critics, as well as to the practice of dramatic poets, in all other ages and countries. For example, a country squire, who is represented with no other vice but that of being a clown, and having the provincial accent upon his tongue, which is neither a fault, nor in his power to

remedy, must be condemned to marry a cast wench, or a cracked chamber-maid. On the other side, a rakehell of the town, whose character is set off with no other accomplishment, but excessive prodigality, profaneness, intemperance, and lust, is rewarded with a lady of great fortune to repair his own, which his vices had almost ruined. And as in a tragedy, the hero is represented to have obtained many victories in order to raise his character in the minds of the spectators; so the hero of a comedy is represented to have been victorious in all his intrigues for the same reason. I do not remember that our English poets ever suffered a criminal amour to succeed upon the stage, till the reign of King Charles the Second. Ever since that time, the alderman is made a cuckold, the deluded virgin is debauched, and adultery and fornication are supposed to be committed behind the scenes, as part of the action. These and many more corruptions of the theatre, peculiar to our age and nation, need continue no longer than while the court is content to connive at or neglect them. Surely a pension would not be ill employed on some men of wit, learning, and virtue, who might have power to strike out every offensive or unbecoming passage, from plays already written, as well as those that may be offered to the stage for the future. By which, and other wise regulations, the theatre might become a very innocent and useful diversion, instead of being a scandal and reproach to our religion and country.

The proposals I have hitherto made for the advancement of religion and morality, are such as come within reach of the administration; such as a pious active prince, with a steady resolution, might soon bring to effect. Neither am I aware of any objections to be raised against what I have

advanced; unless it should be thought, that making religion a necessary step to interest and favour might increase hypocrisy among us; and I readily believe it would. But if one in twenty should be brought over to true piety by this, or the like methods, and the other nineteen be only hypocrites, the advantage would still be great. Besides, hypocrisy is much more eligible than open infidelity and vice; it wears the livery of religion; it acknowledges her authority, and is cautious of giving scandal. Nay, a long continued disguise is too great a constraint upon human nature, especially an English disposition: men would leave off their vices out of mere weariness, rather than undergo the toil and hazard, and perhaps the expense, of practising them perpetually in private. And I believe it is often with religion as it is with love; which, by much dissembling, at last grows real.

All other projects to this great end have proved hitherto ineffectual. Laws against immorality have not been executed, and proclamations occasionally issued out to enforce them are wholly unregarded, as things of form. Religious societies, though begun with excellent intention, and by persons of true piety, are said, I know not whether truly or not, to have dwindled into factious clubs, and grown a trade to enrich little knavish informers of the meanest rank, such as common constables, and broken shopkeepers.

And that some effectual attempt should be made toward such a reformation, is perhaps more necessary than people commonly apprehend; because the ruin of a state is generally preceded by a universal degeneracy of manners, and contempt of religion; which is entirely our case at present.

Diis te minorem, quod geris, imperas. HOR.

Neither is this a matter to be deferred till a more convenient time of peace and leisure; because a reformation in men's faith and morals is the best natural, as well as religious means, to bring the war to a good conclusion. For, if men in trust performed their duty for conscience sake, affairs would not suffer through fraud, falsehood, and neglect, as they now perpetually do. And if they believed a God, and his providence, and acted accordingly, they might reasonably hope for his divine assistance, in so just a cause as ours.

Nor could the majesty of the English crown appear, upon any occasion, in a greater lustre, either to foreigners or subjects, than by an administration, which, producing such great effects, would discover so much power. And power being the natural appetite of princes, a limited monarch cannot so well gratify it in anything as a strict execution of the laws.

Besides, all parties would be obliged to close with so good a work as this, for their own reputation: neither is any expedient more likely to unite them. For the most violent party men, I have ever observed, are such as in the conduct of their lives have discovered least sense of religion or morality; and when all such are laid aside, at least those among them as shall be found incorrigible, it will be a matter perhaps of no great difficulty to reconcile the rest.

The many corruptions at present in every branch of business are almost inconceivable. I have heard it computed by skilful persons, that of six millions raised every year for the service of the public, one-third, at least, is sunk and intercepted through the several classes and subordinations of artful men in office, before the remainder is applied to the proper uses. This is an accidental ill effect of our freedom.

And while such men are in trust, who have no check from within, nor any views but toward their interest, there is no other fence against them, but the certainty of being hanged upon the first discovery, by the arbitrary will of an unlimited monarch, or his vizier. Among us, the only danger to be apprehended is the loss of an employment; and that danger is to be eluded a thousand ways. Besides, when fraud is great, it furnishes weapons to defend itself: and at worst, if the crimes be so flagrant, that a man is laid aside out of perfect shame, (which rarely happens,) he retires loaded with the spoils of the nation; *et fruitur diis iratis.* I could name a commission, where several persons, out of a salary of five hundred pounds, without other visible revenues, have always lived at the rate of two thousand, and laid out forty or fifty thousand upon purchases of lands or annuities. A hundred other instances of the same kind might easily be produced. What remedy, therefore, can be found against such grievances, in a constitution like ours, but to bring religion into countenance, and encourage those, who, from the hope of future reward, and dread of future punishment, will be moved to act with justice and integrity?

This is not to be accomplished any other way than by introducing religion, as much as possible, to be the turn and fashion of the age; which only lies in the power of the administration; the prince with utmost strictness regulating the court, the ministry, and other persons in great employment; and these, by their example and authority, reforming all who have dependence on them.

It is certain, that a reformation successfully carried on in this great town, would in time spread itself over the whole kingdom: since most of the considerable youth pass here that season of their lives,

wherein the strongest impressions are made, in order to improve their education, or advance their fortune; and those among them, who return into their several counties, are sure to be followed and imitated, as the greatest patterns of wit and good breeding.

And if things were once in this train, that is, if virtue and religion were established as the necessary titles to reputation and preferment; and if vice and infidelity were not only loaden with infamy, but made the infallible ruin of all men's pretensions; our duty, by becoming our interest, would take root in our natures, and mix with the very genius of our people; so that it would not be easy for the example of one wicked prince to bring us back to our former corruptions.

I have confined myself (as it is before observed) to those methods for the advancement of piety, which are in the power of a prince, limited like ours, by a strict execution of the laws already in force. And this is enough for a project, that comes without any name or recommendation; I doubt, a great deal more than will suddenly be reduced into practice. Though if any disposition should appear toward so good a work, it is certain that the assistance of the legislative power would be necessary to make it more complete. I will instance only a few particulars.

In order to reform the vices of this town, which, as we have said, has so mighty an influence on the whole kingdom, it would be very instrumental to have a law made, that all taverns and alehouses should be obliged to dismiss their company at twelve at night, and shut up their doors; and that no woman should be suffered to enter any tavern or alehouse, upon any pretence whatsoever. It is easy to conceive what a number of ill consequences

such a law would prevent; the mischiefs of quarrels, and lewdness, and thefts, and midnight brawls, the diseases of intemperance and venery, and a thousand other evils needless to mention. Nor would it be amiss, if the masters of those public-houses were obliged, upon the severest penalties, to give only a proportioned quantity of drink to every company; and when he found his guests disordered with excess, to refuse them any more.

I believe there is hardly a nation in Christendom, where all kind of fraud is practised in so unmeasurable a degree as with us. The lawyer, the tradesman, the mechanic, have found so many arts to deceive in their several callings, that they far outgrow the common prudence of mankind, which is in no sort able to fence against them. Neither could the legislature in anything more consult the public good, than by providing some effectual remedy against this evil, which, in several cases, deserves greater punishment than many crimes that are capital among us. The vintner, who, by mixing poison with his wines, destroys more lives than any one disease in the bill of mortality; the lawyer, who persuades you to a purchase which he knows is mortgaged for more than the worth, to the ruin of you and your family; the goldsmith or scrivener, who takes all your fortune to dispose of, when he has beforehand resolved to break the following day, do surely deserve the gallows much better than the wretch who is carried thither for stealing a horse.

It cannot easily be answered to God or man, why a law is not made for limiting the press; at least so far as to prevent the publishing of such pernicious books, as, under pretence of freethinking, endeavour to overthrow those tenets in religion which have been held inviolable, almost in all ages, by every sect that pretend to be Christian; and cannot, there-

fore, with any colour of reason, be called points in controversy, or matters of speculation, as some would pretend. The doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, and even the truth of all revelation, are daily exploded and denied in books openly printed; though it is to be supposed neither party will avow such principles, or own the supporting of them to be any way necessary to their service.

It would be endless to set down every corruption or defect which requires a remedy from the legislative power. Senates are likely to have little regard for any proposals that come from without doors; though, under a due sense of my own inabilities, I am fully convinced, that the unbiassed thoughts of an honest and wise man, employed on the good of his country, may be better digested than the results of a multitude, where faction and interest too often prevail; as a single guide may direct the way better than five hundred, who have contrary views, or look asquint, or shut their eyes.

I shall therefore mention but one more particular, which I think the Parliament ought to take under consideration; whether it be not a shame to our country, and a scandal to Christianity, that in many towns, where there is a prodigious increase in the number of houses and inhabitants, so little care should be taken for the building of churches, that five parts in six of the people are absolutely hindered from hearing divine service? particularly here in London,* where a single minister, with one or two sorry curates, has the care sometimes of

* This paragraph is known to have given the first hint to certain bishops, particularly to Bishop Atterbury, in the Earl of Oxford's ministry, to procure a fund for building fifty new churches in London.

above twenty thousand souls incumbent on him; a neglect of religion so ignominious, in my opinion, that it can hardly be equalled in any civilized age or country.

But, to leave these airy imaginations of introducing new laws for the amendment of mankind, what I principally insist on is, a due execution of the old, which lies wholly in the crown, and in the authority thence derived: I return, therefore, to my former assertion, that if stations of power, trust, profit, and honour, were constantly made the rewards of virtue and piety, such an administration must needs have a mighty influence on the faith and morals of the whole kingdom: and men of great abilities would then endeavour to excel in the duties of a religious life, in order to qualify themselves for public service. I may possibly be wrong in some of the means I prescribe towards this end; but that is no material objection against the design itself. Let those who are at the helm contrive it better, which, perhaps, they may easily do. Everybody will agree that the disease is manifest, as well as dangerous; that some remedy is necessary, and that none yet applied has been effectual; which is a sufficient excuse for any man who wishes well to his country, to offer his thoughts, when he can have no other end in view but the public good. The present Queen is a princess of as many and great virtues as ever filled a throne: how would it brighten her character to the present and after ages, if she would exert her utmost authority to instil some share of those virtues into her people, which they are too degenerate to learn only from her example! and, be it spoke with all the veneration possible for so excellent a sovereign, her best endeavours in this weighty affair are a most important part of her duty, as well as of her interest and her honour.

But it must be confessed, that as things are now, every man thinks he has laid in a sufficient stock of merit, and may pretend to any employment, provided he has been loud and frequent in declaring himself hearty for the government. It is true, he is a man of pleasure, and a freethinker; that is, in other words, he is profligate in his morals, and a despiser of religion; but in point of party, he is one to be confided in; he is an assertor of liberty and property; he rattles it out against popery and arbitrary power, and priestcraft and high church. It is enough: he is a person fully qualified for any employment, in the court or the navy, the law or the revenue; where he will be sure to leave no arts untried, of bribery, fraud, injustice, oppression, that he can practise with any hope of impunity. No wonder such men are true to a government where liberty runs high, where property, however attained, is so well secured, and where the administration is at least so gentle: it is impossible they could choose any other constitution, without changing to their loss.

Fidelity to a present establishment is indeed the principal means to defend it from a foreign enemy, but without other qualifications, will not prevent corruptions from within; and states are more often ruined by these than the other.

To conclude: whether the proposals I have offered toward a reformation, be such as are most prudent and convenient, may probably be a question; but it is none at all, whether some reformation be absolutely necessary; because the nature of things is such, that if abuses be not remedied, they will certainly increase, nor ever stop, till they end in the subversion of a commonwealth. As there must always of necessity be some corruptions, so, in a well-instituted state, the executive power will be always contending against them, by reducing things

(as Machiavel speaks) to their first principles; never letting abuses grow inveterate, or multiply so far, that it will be hard to find remedies, and perhaps impossible to apply them. As he that would keep his house in repair must attend every little breach or flaw, and supply it immediately, else time alone will bring all to ruin; how much more the common accidents of storms and rain? he must live in perpetual danger of his house falling about his ears; and will find it cheaper to throw it quite down, and build it again from the ground, perhaps upon a new foundation, or at least in a new form, which may neither be so safe nor so convenient as the old.

REMARKS

UPON

A BOOK,

ENTITLED

"THE RIGHTS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH," &c.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708, BUT LEFT UNFINISHED.

In the year 1706, Dr. Matthew Tindal, a civilian of some reputation, published a book, entitled, "The Rights of the Christian Church asserted, against the Romish and all other Priests, who claim an independent Power over it: with a Preface concerning the Government of the Church of England, as by law established." This singular treatise, under covert of an attack upon the Romish Church, was principally intended to sap the foundations of the national Church of England. The alarm was speedily taken, and many champions appeared in defence of the establishment. Among these, the most remarkable was the learned Dr. Hickes, of Oxford, who published two treatises, "Of the Christian Priesthood," and "Of the Dignity of the Episcopal Order," and several other pieces, in answer to Tindal's "Rights of the Christian Church." Dr. William Wotton, chaplain to the Earl of Nottingham, attacked the same work, in a sermon preached at a visitation of the Bishop of Lincoln, and in another tract. Samuel Hill, Conyers-Place, and finally Mr. Oldisworth, entered also into the controversy, which was maintained with equal zeal on both sides, until it was swallowed up in the more furious and universal disputes occasioned by Sacheverel's Sermon. Swift, it would seem,

had prepared materials for entering vigorously into the contest with Tindal, nor can there be a doubt of the powerful effect which his interference would have produced, if we judge what the work must have been when completed, by the following unembodied hints.

We cannot better ascertain the tendency of Tindal's work, than by quoting those passages upon which the grand jury of Middlesex presented the author, printer, and publisher of "The Rights of the Christian Church," as dangerous and disaffected persons, and promoters of sedition and profaneness. This charge they grounded upon the following extracts :—

"The church is a private society, and no more power belonging to it than to other private companies and clubs, and, consequently, all the right any one has to be an ecclesiastical officer, and the power he is intrusted with, depends on the consent of the parties concerned, and is no greater than they can bestow."—(*The Book*, p. 104.) "The Scriptures nowhere make the receiving the Lord's Supper from the hands of a priest necessary."—(Page 105.) "The remembrance of Christ's sufferings a mere grace-cup delivered to be handed about."—(Page 108.) "Among Christians, one no more than another can be reckoned a priest from Scripture."—"And the clerk has as good a title to the priesthood as the parson.—Every one, as well as the minister, rightly consecrateth the elements to himself.—Anything farther than this, may rather be called Conjuration than Consecration."—(Page 313.) "The absurdities of bishops being, by divine appointment, governors of the Christian church, and others are capable of being of that number, who derive not their right by an uninterrupted succession of bishops in the Catholic church."—(Page 255.) "The supreme powers had no way to escape the heavier oppressions, and more insupportable usurpations of their own clergy, than by submitting to the Pope's milder yoke and gentler authority."—(Page 151.) "One grand cause of mistake is, not considering when God acts as governor of the universe, and when as prince of a particular nation. The Jews, when they came out of the land of bondage, were under no settled government, until God was pleased to offer himself to be their king, to which all the people expressly consented.—God's laws bound no nation, except those that agreed to the Horeb contract."—(Page 47.) "Not only an independent power of excommunication, but of ordination in the clergy, is inconsistent with the magistrate's right to protect the commonwealth."—(Page 118.) "Priests, no more than spiritual make-baits, baraters, boutefeux, and incendiaries, and who make churches serve to worse purposes than beargardens."—(Page 15.) "It is a grand mistake to suppose the magistrate's power extends to indifferent things.—Men have

liberty as they please, and a right—to form what clubs, companies, or meetings, they think fit, either for business or pleasure, which the magistrates—cannot hinder, without manifest injustice."—(Page 312.) "God—interposed not amongst the Jews, until they had chosen him for their king."

In 1710, Tindal's book, with some other of his pamphlets, were ordered, by a vote of the House of Commons, to be burned along with Sacheverel's Sermon—an example of impartiality in assigning punishment to latitudinarians, as well as to high-flyers, for which the people gave the ministry very little credit.

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BEFORE I enter upon a particular examination of this treatise, it will be convenient to do two things:

First, To give some account of the author, together with the motives that might probably engage him in such a work. And,

Secondly, To discover the nature and tendency in general of the work itself.

The first of these, although it has been objected against, seems highly reasonable, especially in books that instil pernicious principles. For, although a book is not intrinsically much better or worse, according to the stature or complexion of the author, yet when it happens to make a noise, we are apt, and curious, as in other noises, to look about from whence it comes. But, however, there is something more in the matter.

If a theological subject be well handled by a layman, it is better received than if it came from a divine: and, that for reasons obvious enough, which, although of little weight in themselves, will ever have a great deal with mankind.

But when books are written with ill intentions, to advance dangerous opinions, or destroy foundations, it may be then of real use to know from what

quarter they come, and go a good way toward their confutation. For instance, if any man should write a book against the lawfulness of punishing felony with death; and upon inquiry, the author should be found in Newgate, under condemnation, for robbing a house; his arguments would, not very unjustly, lose much of their force from the circumstances he lay under. So, when Milton writ his book of divorces, it was presently rejected as an occasional treatise; because everybody knew he had a shrew for his wife. Neither can there be any reason imagined, why he might not, after he was blind, have writ another upon the danger and inconvenience of eyes. But it is a piece of logic which will hardly pass on the world, that because one man has a sore nose, therefore all the town should put plasters upon theirs. So, if this treatise about the rights of the church, should prove to be the work of a man steady in his principles, of exact morals, and profound learning, a true lover of his country, and a hater of Christianity, as what he really believes to be a cheat upon mankind, whom he would undeceive purely for their good; it might be apt to check unwary men, even of good dispositions toward religion. But, if it be found the production of a man soured with age and misfortunes, together with the consciousness of past miscarriages; of one, who in hopes of preferment, was reconciled to the Popish religion; of one, wholly prostitute in life and principles, and only an enemy to religion, because it condemns them:* in this case, and this last I find

* Dr. Matthew Tindal became a convert to the Romish religion during the reign of James II. What share interest had in his conversion may be easily imagined; but it is uncertain whether it was the disappointment of his expectations, or conviction, that, in 1687, induced him to reconcile himself to the Church of England, and become a decided favourer of those

is the universal opinion, he is likely to have few proselytes, beside those, who from a sense of their vicious lives, require to be perpetually supplied by such amusements as this; which serve to flatter their wishes, and debase their understandings.

I know there are some who would fain have it, that this discourse was written by a club of free-thinkers, among whom the supposed author only came in for a share. But, sure, we cannot judge so meanly of any party, without affronting the dignity of mankind. If this be so, and if here be the product of all their quotas and contributions, we must needs allow that freethinking is a most confined and limited talent. It is true, indeed, the whole discourse seems to be a motley, inconsistent composition, made up of various shreds of equal fineness, although of different colours. It is a bundle of incoherent maxims and assertions, that frequently destroy one another. But still there is the same flatness of thought and style; the same weak advances toward wit and raillery; the same petulancy and pertness of spirit; the same train of superficial reading; the same threadbare quotation; the same affectation of forming general rules upon false and scanty premises. And lastly, the same vapid venom sprinkled over the whole; which, like the dying impotent bite of a trodden benumbed snake, may be nauseous and offensive, but cannot be very dangerous.

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doctrines which produced the revolution. He often sate as a judge in the Court of Delegates, but did not practise much as an advocate in Doctor's Commons. His chief means of support was a pension from government of £200. Tindal died in 1733, three years after publication of his grand deistical work, "Christianity as old as the Creation." His effects, amounting to £2000, and upwards, were appropriated, by the noted Eustace Budgell, to the prejudice of the heir at law, under a will attended with circumstances of great suspicion.

And, indeed, I am so far from thinking this libel to be born of several fathers, that it has been the wonder of several others, as well as myself, how it was possible for any man, who appears to have gone the common circle of academical education;* who has taken so universal a liberty, and has so entirely laid aside all regards, not only of Christianity, but common truth and justice; one who is dead to all sense of shame, and seems to be past the getting or losing of a reputation, should, with so many advantages, and upon so unlimited a subject, come out with so poor, so jejune a production. Should we pity, or be amazed at so perverse a talent, which instead of qualifying an author to give a new turn to old matters, disposes him quite contrary to talk in an old beaten trivial manner upon topics wholly new? to make so many sallies into pedantry without a call, upon a subject the most alien, and in the very moments he is declaiming against it, and in an age too, where it is so violently exploded, especially among those readers he proposes to entertain?

I know it will be said, that this is only to talk in the common style of an answerer; but I have not so little policy. If there were any hope of reputation, or merit from such victory, I should be apt, like others, to cry up the courage and conduct of an enemy. Whereas to detect the weakness, the malice, the sophistry, the falsehood, the ignorance of such a writer, requires little more than to rank his perfections in such an order, and place them in such a light, that the commonest reader may form a judgment of them.

It may still be a wonder how so heavy a book, written upon a subject in appearance so little instruc-

* Tindal was educated at Oxford, and had a fellowship at All-Souls, the only preferment he ever enjoyed.

tive or diverting, should survive to three editions, and consequently find a better reception than is usual with such bulky, spiritless volumes; and this, in an age that pretends so soon to be nauseated with what is tedious and dull. To which I can only return, that, as burning a book by the common hangman is a known expedient to make it sell, so, to write a book that deserves such treatment, is another: and a third, perhaps as effectual as either, is to ply an insipid, worthless tract, with grave and learned answers, as Dr. Hickes, Dr. Potter, and Mr. Wotton have done. Such performances, however commendable, have glanced a reputation upon the piece, which owes its life to the strength of those hands and weapons that were raised to destroy it; like flinging a mountain upon a worm, which, instead of being bruised, by the advantage of its littleness, lodges under it unhurt.

But neither is this all. For the subject, as unpromising as it seems at first view, is no less than that of Lucretius, to free men's minds from the bondage of religion; and this not by little hints and by piecemeal, after the manner of those little atheistical tracts that steal into the world, but in a thorough wholesale manner by making religion, church, Christianity, with all their concomitants, a perfect contrivance of the civil power. It is an imputation often charged on this sort of men, that, by their invectives against religion, they can possibly propose no other end than that of fortifying themselves and others against the reproaches of a vicious life; it being necessary for men of libertine practices, to embrace libertine principles, or else they cannot act in consistence with any reason, or preserve any peace of mind. Whether such authors have this design, (whereof I think they have never gone about to acquit themselves,) thus much is certain, that no

other use is made of such writings; neither did I ever hear this author's book justified by any person, either Whig or Tory, except such who are of that profligate character. And I believe, whoever examines it, will be of the same opinion; although, indeed, such wretches are so numerous, that it seems rather surprising, why the book has had no more editions, than why it should have so many.

Having thus endeavoured to satisfy the curious with some account of this author's character, let us examine what might probably be the motives to engage him in such a work. I shall say nothing of the principal, which is a sum of money; because that is not a mark to distinguish him from any other trader with the press. I will say nothing of revenge and malice, from resentment of the indignities and contempt he has undergone for his crime of apostacy. To this passion he has thought fit to sacrifice order, propriety, discretion, and common sense, as may be seen in every page of his book; but I am deceived, if there were not a third motive as powerful as the other two; and that is, vanity. About the latter end of King James's reign, he had almost finished a learned discourse in defence of the Church of Rome, and to justify his conversion: all which, upon the Revolution, was quite out of season. Having thus prostituted his reputation, and at once ruined his hopes, he had no recourse left, but to shew his spite against religion in general, the false pretensions to which had proved so destructive to his credit and fortune: and at the same time, loath to employ the speculations of so many years to no purpose; by an easy turn, the same arguments he had made use of to advance Popery, were full as properly levelled by him against Christianity itself; like the image, which, while it was new and handsome, was worshipped for a saint; and when it came to be old and broken,

was still good enough to make a tolerable devil. And therefore, every reader will observe, that the arguments for Popery are much the strongest of any in his book, as I shall farther remark when I find them in my way.

There is one circumstance in his title-page, which I take to be not amiss, where he calls his book "Part the First." This is a project to fright away answerers, and make the poor advocates for religion believe he still keeps farther vengeance in petto. It must be allowed, he has not wholly lost time while he was of the Romish communion. This very trick he learned from his old father the Pope, whose custom it is to lift up his hand, and threaten to fulminate, when he never meant to shoot his bolts; because the princes of Christendom had learned the secret to avoid or despise them. Dr. Hickes knew this very well, and therefore, in his answer to this "Book of Rights," where a second part is threatened, like a rash person, he desperately cries, "Let it come." But I, who have too much phlegm to provoke angry wits of his standard, must tell the author, that the doctor plays the wag, as if he were sure it were all grimace. For my part, I declare, if he writes a second part, I will not write another answer; or if I do, it shall be published before the other part comes out.*

There may have been another motive, although it be hardly credible, both for publishing this work, and threatening a second part: It is soon conceived how far the sense of a man's vanity will transport

* Tindal did, however, attempt to maintain his ground against his numerous opponents, in "A Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church, against a late Visitation Sermon, 8vo, 1707;" and also in "A Second Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church considered, in two late Indictments against a Bookseller and his Servant, for selling one of the said Books, 1707."

him. This man must have somewhere heard, that dangerous enemies have been often bribed to silence with money or preferment: And therefore, to shew how formidable he is, he has published his first essay; and in hopes of hire to be quiet, has frighted us with his design of another. What must the clergy do in these unhappy circumstances? If they should bestow this man bread enough to stop his mouth, it will but open those of a hundred more, who are every whit as well qualified to rail as he. And truly, when I compare the former enemies to Christianity, such as Socinus, Hobbes, and Spinosa, with such of their successors, as Toland, Asgil, Coward, Gildon, this author of the Rights, and some others; the church appears to me like the sick old lion in the fable, who, after having his person outraged by the bull, the elephant, the horse, and the bear, took nothing so much to heart as to find himself at last insulted by the spurn of an ass.

I will now add a few words, to give the reader some general notion of the nature and tendency of the work itself.

I think I may assert, without the least partiality, that it is a treatise wholly devoid of wit or learning, under the most violent and weak endeavours and pretences to both: that it is replenished throughout with bold, rude, improbable falsehoods, and gross misinterpretations; and supported by the most impudent sophistry, and false logic, I have anywhere observed. To this he has added a paltry, traditional cant of priestrid and priestcraft, without reason or pretext as he applies it. And when he rails at those doctrines in Popery, (which no Protestant was ever supposed to believe,) he leads the reader, however, by the hand, to make applications against the English clergy; and then he never fails to triumph, as if he had made a very shrewd and notable stroke.

And because the court and kingdom seemed disposed to moderation with regard to Dissenters, more perhaps than is agreeable to the hot unreasonable temper of some mistaken men among us; therefore, under the shelter of that popular opinion, he ridicules all that is sound in religion, even Christianity itself, under the names of Jacobite, Tackers, High Church, and other terms of factious jargon. All which, if it were to be first rased from his book, (as just so much of nothing to the purpose,) how little would remain to give the trouble of an answer! To which let me add, that the spirit, or genius, which animates the whole, is plainly perceived to be nothing else but the abortive malice of an old neglected man,* who has long lain under the extremes of obloquy, poverty, and contempt, that have soured his temper, and made him fearless. But where is the merit of being bold, to a man that is secure of impunity to his person, and is past apprehension of anything else? He that has neither reputation nor bread, has very little else to lose, and has therefore as little to fear. And as it is usually said, "Whoever values not his own life, is master of another man's," so there is something like it in reputation: He that is wholly lost to all regards of truth or modesty, may scatter so much calumny and scandal, that some part may perhaps be taken up before it fall to the ground; because the ill talent of the world is such, that those who will be at pains enough to inform themselves in a malicious story, will take none at all to be undeceived, nay, will be apt, with some reluctance, to admit a favourable truth.

To expostulate, therefore, with this author for doing mischief to religion, is to strew his bed with

* Dr. Tindal might be *neglected*, but in 1707 he was only about fifty years old, and in fact lived near 30 years afterwards.

roses; he will reply in triumph, that this was his design; and I am loath to mortify him, by asserting he has done none at all. For I never yet saw so poor an atheistical scribble, which would not serve as a twig for sinking libertines to catch at. It must be allowed in their behalf, that the faith of Christians is not as a grain of mustard seed in comparison of theirs, which can remove such mountains of absurdities, and submit with so entire a resignation to such apostles. If these men had any share of that reason they pretend to, they would retire into Christianity, merely to give it ease. And, therefore, men can never be confirmed in such doctrines, until they are confirmed in their vices; which last, as we have already observed, is the principal design of this, and all other writers, against revealed religion.

I am now opening the book which I propose to examine; an employment, as it is entirely new to me, so it is that to which, of all others, I have naturally the greatest antipathy. And indeed, who can dwell upon a tedious piece of insipid thinking, and false reasoning, so long as I am likely to do, without sharing the infection?

But, before I plunge into the depths of the book itself, I must be forced to wade through the shallows of a long preface.

This preface, large as we see it, is only made up of such supernumerary arguments against an independent power in the church, as he could not, without nauseous repetition, scatter into the body of his book: and it is detached, like a forlorn hope, to blunt the enemy's sword that intends to attack him. Now, I think, it will be easy to prove, that the opinion of *imperium in imperio*, in the sense he charges it upon the clergy of England, is what no one divine of any reputation, and very few, at all

did ever maintain; and that their universal sentiment in this matter is such as few Protestants did ever dispute. But if the author of the Regale, or two or three more obscure writers, have carried any points farther than Scripture and reason will allow, (which is more than I know, or shall trouble myself to inquire,) the clergy of England is no more answerable for those, than the laity is for all the folly and impertinence of this treatise. And, therefore, that people may not be amused, or think this man is somewhat, that he has advanced or defended any oppressed truth, or overthrown any growing dangerous errors, I will set in as clear a light as I can what I conceive to be held by the established clergy, and all reasonable Protestants, in this matter.

Everybody knows and allows, that in all government there is an absolute, unlimited, legislative power; which is originally in the body of the people, although, by custom, conquest, usurpation, or other accidents, sometimes fallen into the hands of one, or a few. This in England is placed in the three estates, (otherwise called the two Houses of Parliament,) in conjunction with the King. And whatever they please to enact, or to repeal in the settled forms, whether it be ecclesiastical or civil, immediately becomes law, or nullity. Their decrees may be against equity, truth, reason, and religion, but they are not against law: because law is the will of the supreme legislature, and that is themselves. And there is no manner of doubt but the same authority, whenever it pleases, may abolish Christianity, and set up the Jewish, Mahometan, and heathen religion. In short, they may do anything within the compass of human power. And therefore, who will dispute, that the same law, which deprived the church, not only of lands, misapplied to superstitious uses, but even the tithes and glebes, (the ancient and necessary

support of parish priests,) may take away all the rest, whenever the lawgivers please, and make the priesthood as primitive, as this writer, or others of his stamp, can desire.

But as the supreme power can certainly do ten thousand things more than it ought, so there are several things which some people may think it can do, although it really cannot. For it unfortunately happens, that edicts which cannot be executed, will not alter the nature of things. So, if a king and parliament should please to enact, that a woman who has been a month married is *virgo intacta*, would that actually restore her to her primitive state? If the supreme power should resolve a corporal of dragoons to be a doctor of divinity, law, or physic, few, I believe, would trust their souls, fortunes, or bodies, to his direction; because that power is neither fit to judge or teach those qualifications which are absolutely necessary to the several professions. Put the case, that walking on the slack rope * were the only talent required by an act of parliament, for making a man a bishop; no doubt, when a man had done his feat of activity in form, he might sit in the House of Lords, put on his robes and his rochet, go down to his palace, receive and spend his rents; but it requires very little Christianity to believe this tumbler to be one whit more a bishop than he was before, because the law of God has otherwise decreed; which law, although a nation may refuse to receive, it cannot alter in its own nature.

And here lies the mistake of this superficial man, who is not able to distinguish between what the civil power can hinder and what it can do. "If the par-

* Perhaps the system of preferments in Liliput may be traced to this primitive idea.

liament can annul ecclesiastical laws, they must be able to make them, since no greater power is required for one than the other." See preface, p. viii. This consequence he repeats above twenty times, and always in the wrong. He affects to form a few words into the shape and size of a maxim, then tries it by his ear, and according as he likes the sound and cadence, pronounces it true. Cannot I stand over a man with a great pole, and hinder him from making a watch, although I am not able to make one myself? If I have strength enough to knock a man on the head, does it follow I can raise him to life again? The parliament may condemn all the Greek and Roman authors; can it therefore create new ones in their stead? They may make laws, indeed, and call them canon and ecclesiastical laws, and oblige all men to observe them under pain of high treason. And so may I, who love as well as any man to have in my own family the power in the last resort, take a turnip, tie a string to it, and call it a watch, and turn away all my servants, if they refuse to call it so too.

For my own part, I must confess that this opinion of the independent power of the church, or *imperium in imperio*, wherewith this writer raises such a dust, is what I never imagined to be of any consequence, never once heard disputed amongst divines, nor remember to have read, otherwise than as a scheme in one or two authors of middle rank, but with very little weight laid on it. And I dare believe, there is hardly one divine in ten, that ever once thought of this matter. Yet to see a large swelling volume written only to encounter this doctrine, what could one think less, than that the whole body of the clergy were perpetually tiring the press and the pulpit with nothing else?

I remember some years ago a virtuoso writ a small

tract about worms, proved them to be in more places than was generally observed, and made some discoveries by glasses. This having met with some reception, presently the poor man's head was full of nothing but worms; all we eat and drink, all the whole consistence of human bodies, and those of every other animal, the very air we breathed, in short, all nature throughout, was nothing but worms; and, by that system, he solved all difficulties, and from thence all causes in philosophy. Thus it has fared with our author and his independent power. The attack against occasional conformity, and the scarcity of coffee, the invasion of Scotland, the loss of kerseys and narrow cloths, the death of King William, the author's turning papist for preferment, the loss of the battle of Almanza, with ten thousand other misfortunes, are all owing to this *imperium in imperio.*

It will be therefore necessary to set this matter in a clear light, by inquiring whether the clergy have any power independent of the civil, and of what nature it is.

Whenever the Christian religion was embraced by the civil power in any nation, there is no doubt but the magistrates and senates were fully instructed in the rudiments of it. Besides, the Christians were so numerous, and their worship so open before the conversion of princes, that their discipline, as well as doctrine, could not be a secret; they saw plainly a subordination of ecclesiastics, bishops, priests, and deacons: that these had certain powers and employments different from the laity: that the bishops were consecrated, and set apart for that office, by those of their own order: that the presbyters and deacons were differently set apart, always by the bishops: that none but the ecclesiastics presumed to pray or preach in places set apart for

God's worship, or to administer the Lord's supper: that all questions, relating either to discipline or doctrine, were determined in ecclesiastical conventions. These, and the like doctrines and practices, being most of them directly proved, and the rest, by very fair consequence, deduced from the words of our Saviour and his apostles, were certainly received as a divine law, by every prince or state which admitted the Christian religion; and consequently, what they could not justly alter afterward, any more than the common laws of nature. And therefore, although the supreme power can hinder the clergy or church from making any new canons, or executing the old; from consecrating bishops, or refuse those that they do consecrate; or, in short, from performing any ecclesiastical office, as they may from eating, drinking, and sleeping; yet they cannot themselves perform those offices, which are assigned to the clergy by our Saviour and his apostles; or, if they do, it is not according to the divine institution, and consequently, null and void. Our Saviour tells us, "His kingdom is not of this world;" and therefore, to be sure, the world is not of his kingdom; nor can ever please him by interfering in the administration of it, since he has appointed ministers of his own, and has empowered and instructed them for that purpose: so that I believe the clergy, who, as he says, are good at distinguishing, would think it reasonable to distinguish between their power and the liberty of exercising this power. The former they claim immediately from Christ; and the latter, from the permission, connivance, or authority of the civil government; with which the clergy's power, according to the solution I have given, cannot possibly interfere.

But this writer, setting up to form a system upon stale, scanty topics, and a narrow circle of thought,

falls into a thousand absurdities. And for a farther help, he has a talent of rattling out phrases, which seem to have sense, but have none at all: the usual fate of those who are ignorant of the force and compass of words, without which it is impossible for a man to write either pertinently or intelligibly upon the most obvious subjects.

So, in the beginning of the preface, page iv., he says, "The Church of England, being established by acts of parliament, is a perfect creature of the civil power; I mean the polity and discipline of it, and it is that which makes all the contention; for as to the doctrines expressed in the articles, I do not find high church to be in any manner of pain; but they who lay claim to the most orthodoxy, can distinguish themselves out of them." It is observable in this author, that his style is naturally harsh and ungrateful to the ear, and his expressions mean and trivial; but whenever he goes about to polish a period, you may be certain of some gross defect in propriety or meaning: so the lines just quoted seem to run easily over the tongue; and, upon examination, they are perfect nonsense and blunder: to speak in his own borrowed phrase, what is contained in the idea of established? Surely, not existence. Does establishment give being to a thing? He might have said the same thing of Christianity in general, or the existence of God, since both are confirmed by acts of parliament. But the best is behind: for, in the next line, having named the church half a dozen times before, he now says, he means only the polity and discipline of it; as if, having spoken in praise of the art of physic, a man should explain himself, that he meant only the institution of a college of physicians into a president and fellows. And it will appear, that this author, however versed in the practice, has grossly transgressed the rules of nonsense (whose property it is neither to

affirm nor deny), since every visible assertion gathered from those few lines is absolutely false: for where was the necessity of excepting the doctrines expressed in the articles, since these are equally creatures of the civil power, having been established by acts of parliament as well as the others? But the Church of England is no creature of the civil power, either as to its polity or doctrines. The fundamentals of both were deduced from Christ and his apostles, and the instructions of the purest and earliest ages; and were received as such by those princes or states who embraced Christianity, whatever prudential additions have been made to the former by human laws, which alone can be justly altered or annulled by them.

What I have already said, would, I think, be a sufficient answer to his whole preface, and indeed to the greatest part of his book, which is wholly turned upon battering down a sort of independent power in the clergy, which few or none of them ever claimed or defended. But there being certain peculiarities in this preface, that very much set off the wit, the learning, the raillery, reasoning, and sincerity of the author; I shall take notice of some of them as I pass.

But here, I hope, it will not be expected that I should bestow remarks upon every passage in this book that is liable to exception for ignorance, falsehood, dulness, or malice. Where he is so insipid, that nothing can be struck out for the reader's entertainment, I shall observe Horace's rule:

Quæ desperes tractata nitescere posse, relinquas.

Upon which account I shall say nothing of that great instance of his candour and judgment in relation to Dr. Stillingfleet, who (happening to lie under his

displeasure upon the fatal test of *imperium in imperio*) is high church and jacobite, took the oaths of allegiance to save him from the gallows,* and subscribed the articles only to keep his preferment: whereas the character of that prelate is universally known to have been directly the reverse of what this writer gives him.

But before he can attempt to ruin this damnable opinion of two independent powers, he tells us, page vi., "It will be necessary to shew what is contained in the idea of government." Now, it is to be understood, that this refined way of speaking was introduced by Mr. Locke; after whom the author limps as fast as he is able. All the former philosophers in the world, from the age of Socrates to ours, would have ignorantly put the question, *Quid est imperium?* But now, it seems, we must vary our phrase: and since our modern improvement of human understanding, instead of desiring a philosopher to describe or define a mouse-trap, or tell me what it is; I must gravely ask, What is contained in the idea of a mouse-trap? But then, to observe how deeply this new way of putting questions to a man's self makes him enter into the new nature of things; his present business is to shew us what is contained in the idea of government. The company knows nothing of the matter, and would gladly be instructed; which he does in the following words, p. vi.

"It would be in vain for one intelligent being to

* Page v., Tindal quotes Bishop Stillingfleet's Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity, where the bishop says, that a man might be very right in the belief of an article, though mistaken in the explication of it. Upon which he observes: "These men treat the articles as they do the oath of allegiance, which, they say, obliges them not actually to assist the government, but to do nothing against it; that is, nothing that would bring them to the gallows."

pretend to set rules to the actions of another, if he had it not in his power to reward the compliance with, or punish the deviations from his rules, by some good or evil, which is not the natural consequence of those actions; since the forbidding men to do or forbear an action, on the account of that convenience or inconvenience which attends it, whether he who forbids it will or no, can be no more than advice."

I shall not often draw such long quotations as this, which I could not forbear to offer as a specimen of the propriety and perspicuity of this author's style. And, indeed, what a light breaks out upon us all as soon as we have read these words! how thoroughly are we instructed in the whole nature of government! what mighty truths are here discovered, and how clearly conveyed to our understanding! and, therefore, let us melt this refined jargon into the old style, for the improvement of such who are not enough conversant in the new.

If the author were one who used to talk like one of us, he would have spoken in this manner: "I think it necessary to give a full and perfect definition of government, such as will shew the nature and all the properties of it; and my definition is thus: One man will never cure another of stealing horses, merely by minding him of the pains he has taken, the cold he has got, and the shoe-leather he has lost, in stealing that horse; nay, to warn him, that the horse may kick or fling him, or cost him more than he is worth in hay and oats, can be no more than advice. For the gallows is not the natural effect of robbing on the highway, as heat is of fire; and, therefore, if you will govern a man, you must find out some other way of punishment than what he will inflict upon himself."

Or, if this will not do, let us try it in another case, (which I instanced before,) and in his own terms.

Suppose he had thought it necessary (and I think it was as much so as the other) to shew us what is contained in the idea of a mouse-trap, he must have proceeded in these terms: "It would be in vain for an intelligent being to set rules for hindering a mouse from eating his cheese, unless he can inflict upon that mouse some punishment, which is not the natural consequence of eating her cheese. For, to tell her it may lie heavy on her stomach, that she will grow too big to get back into her hole, and the like, can be no more than advice; therefore, we must find out some other way of punishing her, which has more inconveniencies than she will ever suffer by the mere eating of cheese." After this, who is so slow of understanding, as not to have in his mind a full and complete idea of a mouse-trap? Well. —The freethinkers may talk what they please of pedantry, and cant, and jargon of schoolmen, and insignificant terms in the writings of the clergy, if ever the most perplexed and perplexing follower of Aristotle, from Scotus to Suarez, could be a match for this author.

But the strength of his arguments is equal to the clearness of his definitions. For, having most ignorantly divided government into three parts, whereof the first contains the other two; he attempts to prove that the clergy possess none of these by a divine right. And he argues thus, p. vii. "As to a legislative power, if that belongs to the clergy by divine right, it must be when they are assembled in convocation: but the 25th Hen. VIII., c. 19, is a bar to any such divine right, because that act makes it no less than a præmunire for them so much as to meet without the king's writ," &c. So that the force of his argument lies here; if the clergy had a divine right, it is taken away by the 25th of Henry the Eighth. And as ridiculous

as this argument is, the preface and book are founded upon it.

Another argument against the legislative power in the clergy of England is, p. viii., that Tacitus tells us; that in great affairs, the Germans consulted the whole body of the people: "*De minoribus rebus principes consultant, de majoribus omnes: ita tamen, ut ea quoque, quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes pertractentur.*"—*Tacitus de Moribus et Populis Germaniæ.* Upon which Tindal observes thus: "*De majoribus omnes,*" was a fundamental among our ancestors long before they arrived in Great Britain, and matters of religion were ever reckoned among their *majora.* (See Pref. p. viii. and ix.) Now it is plain, that our ancestors, the Saxons, came from Germany: it is likewise plain, that religion was always reckoned by the heathens among their *majora;* and it is plain, the whole body of the people could not be the clergy, and therefore the clergy of England have no legislative power.

Thirdly, p. ix. They have no legislative power, because Mr. Washington, in his "Observations on the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of the Kings of England, shews, from undeniable authorities, that in the time of William the Conqueror, and several of his successors, there were no laws enacted concerning religion, but by the great council of the kingdom." I hope, likewise, Mr. Washington observes, that this great council of the kingdom, as appears by undeniable authorities, was sometimes entirely composed of bishops and clergy, and called the parliament, and often consulted upon affairs of state, as well as church, as it is agreed by twenty writers of those ages; and if Mr. Washington says otherwise, he is an author just fit to be quoted by beaux.

Fourthly.—But it is endless to pursue this matter any farther; in that it is plain, the clergy have no

divine right to make laws; because Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Elizabeth, with their parliaments, will not allow it them. Now, without examining what divine right the clergy have, or how far it extends; is it any sort of proof that I have no right, because a stronger power will not let me exercise it? or, does all that this author says through his preface, or book itself, offer any other sort of argument but this, or what he deduces the same way?

But his arguments and definitions are yet more supportable than the grossness of the historical remarks, which are scattered so plentifully in his book that it would be tedious to enumerate, or to shew the fraud and ignorance of them. I beg the reader's leave to take notice of one here just in my way; and the rather, because I design for the future to let hundreds of them pass without farther notice. "When," says he, p. x., "by the abolishing of the Pope's power, things were brought back to their ancient channel, the parliament's right in making ecclesiastical laws revived of course." What can possibly be meant by this "ancient channel?" Why, the channel that things ran in before the Pope had any power in England: that is to say, before Austin the monk converted England; before which time, it seems, the parliament had a right to make ecclesiastical laws. And what parliament could this be? Why the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons, met at Westminster.

I cannot here forbear reproving the folly and pedantry of some lawyers, whose opinions this poor creature blindly follows, and renders yet more absurd by his comments. The knowledge of our constitution can be only attained by consulting the earliest English histories, of which those gentlemen seem utterly ignorant, farther than a quotation or

index. They would fain derive our government, as now constituted, from antiquity: and because they have seen Tacitus quoted for his *Majoribus omnes;* and have read of the Goths' military institution in their progress and conquests, they presently dream of a parliament. Had their reading reached so far, they might have deduced it much more fairly from Aristotle and Polybius; who both distinctly name the composition of *rex, seniores, et populus;* and the latter, as I remember particularly, with the highest approbation. The princes in the Saxon Heptarchy did indeed call their nobles sometimes together upon weighty affairs, as most other princes of the world have done in all ages. But they made war and peace, and raised money, by their own authority: they gave or mended laws by their charters, and they raised armies by their tenures. Besides, some of those kingdoms fell in by conquests before England was reduced under one head, and therefore could pretend no rights but by the concessions of the conqueror.

Farther, which is more material, upon the admission of Christianity, great quantities of land were acquired by the clergy, so that the great council of the nation was often entirely of churchmen, and ever a considerable part. But our present constitution is an artificial thing, not fairly to be traced, in my opinion, beyond Henry I. Since which time it has in every age admitted several alterations; and differs now as much, even from what it was then, as almost any two species of government described by Aristotle. And it would be much more reasonable to affirm, that the government of Rome continued the same under Justinian, as it was in the time of Scipio, because the senate and consuls still remained, although the power of both had been, for several hundred years, transferred to the emperor.

References to Tindal's Book, and Remarks upon it, which the Author left thus indigested, being hints for himself to use in answering the said Book.

REMARKS ON THE PREFACE.

Page iv., v. "If men of opposite sentiments can subscribe the same articles, they are as much at liberty as if there were none." May not a man subscribe the whole articles, because he differs from another in the explication of one? how many oaths are prescribed, that men may differ in the explication of some part of them? Instance, &c.

Page vi. "Idea of Government." A canting pedantic way, learned from Locke; and how prettily he shews it. Instance—

Page vii. "25 Hen. VIII. cap. 19, is a bar to any such divine right [of legislative power in the clergy]." Absurd to argue against the clergy's divine right because of the statute of Henry VIII. How does that destroy divine right? The sottish way of arguing; from what the parliament can do; from their power, &c.

Page viii. "If the parliament did not think they had a plenitude of power in this matter, they would not have damned all the canons of 1640." What does he mean? A grave divine could not answer all his playhouse and Alsatia* cant, &c. He has read Hudibras, and many plays.

Ibid. "If the parliament can annul ecclesiastical

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* Or White-friars, then a place of asylum, and frequented by sharpers, of whose gibberish there are several specimens in Shadwell's comedy, called The Squire of Alsatia.

laws, they must be able to make them." Distinguish, and shew the silliness, &c.

Ibid. All that he says against the discipline, he might say the same against the doctrine, nay, against the belief of a God, viz., That the legislature might forbid it. The church forms and contrives canons; and the civil power, which is compulsive, confirms them.

Page ix. "There were no laws enacted but by the great council of the kingdom." And that was very often, chiefly, only bishops.

Ibid. "Laws settled by parliament to punish the clergy." What laws were those?

Page x. "The people are bound to no laws but of their own choosing." It is fraudulent; for they may consent to what others choose, and so people often do.

Page xiv., paragraph 6. "The clergy are not supposed to have any divine legislature, because that must be superior to all worldly power; and then the clergy might as well forbid the parliament to meet but when and where they please," &c. No such consequence at all. They have a power exclusive from all others. Ordained to act as clergy, but not govern in civil affairs; nor act without leave of the civil power.

Page xxv. "The parliament suspected the love of power natural to churchmen." Truly, so is the love of pudding, and most other things desirable in this life; and in that they are like the laity, as in all other things that are not good. And therefore, they are held not in esteem for what they are like in, but for their virtues. The true way to abuse them with effect, is to tell us some faults of theirs, that other men have not, or not so much of as they, &c. Might not any man speak full as bad of senates, diets, and parliaments, as he can do

about councils; and as bad of princes, as he does of bishops?

Page xxxi. "They might as well have made Cardinals Campegi and de Chinuchii, Bishops of Salisbury and Worcester, as have enacted that their several sees and bishopricks were utterly void." No. The legislature might determine who should not be a bishop there, but not make a bishop.

Ibid. "Were not a great number deprived by parliament upon the Restoration?" Does he mean presbyters? What signifies that?

Ibid. "Have they not trusted this power with our princes?" Why, ay. But that argues not right, but power. Have they not cut off a king's head? &c. The church must do the best they can, if not what they would.

Page xxxvi. "If tithes and first-fruits are paid to spiritual persons as such, the king or queen is the most spiritual person," &c. As if the first-fruits, &c., were paid to the king, as tithes to a spiritual person.

Page xliii. "King Charles II. thought fit that the bishops in Scotland should hold their bishopricks during will and pleasure: I do not find that High Church complained of this as an encroachment," &c. No; but as a pernicious counsel of Lord Loch.*

Page xliv. "The common law judges have a power to determine whether a man has a legal right to the sacrament." They pretend it, but what we complain of as a most abominable hardship, &c.

Page xlv. "Giving men thus blindly to the devil is an extraordinary piece of complaisance to a lay chancellor." He is something in the right; and

* This contraction does not precisely answer to any Scottish counsellor of the period. Lord Lauderdale is probably meant.

therefore it is a pity there are any; and I hope the church will provide against it. But if the sentence be just, it is not the person, but the contempt. And if the author attacks a man on the highway, and takes but twopence, he shall be sent to the gallows, more terrible to him than the devil, for his contempt of the law, &c.—Therefore he need not complain of being sent to hell.

Page lxiv. Mr. Lesley may carry things too far, as it is natural, because the other extreme is so great. But what he says of the king's losses, since the church lands were given away, is too great a truth, &c.

Page lxxvi. "To which I have nothing to plead, except the zeal I have for the church of England." You will see some pages farther, what he means by the church; but it is not fair, not to begin with telling us what is contained in the idea of a church, &c.

Page lxxxiii. "They will not be angry with me for thinking better of the church than they do," &c. No, but they will differ from you; because the worse the Queen is pleased you think her better. I believe the church will not concern themselves much about your opinion of them, &c.

Page lxxxiv. "But the popish, eastern, presbyterian, and jacobite clergy," &c. This is like a general pardon, with such exceptions as make it useless, if we compute it, &c.

Page lxxxvii. "Misapplying of the word church," &c. This is cavilling. No doubt his project is for exempting the people; but that is not what in common speech we usually mean by the church. Besides, who does not know that distinction?

Ibid. "Constantly apply the same ideas to them." This is, in old English, meaning the same thing.

Page lxxxix. "Demonstrates I could have no

designs but the promoting of truth," &c. Yes, several designs, as money, spleen, atheism, &c. What? will any man think truth was his design, and not money and malice? Does he expect the House will go into a committee for a bill to bring things to his scheme, to confound everything? &c.

Some deny Tindal to be the author, and produce stories of his dulness and stupidity. But what is there in all this book, that the dullest man in England might not write, if he were angry and bold enough, and had no regard to truth?

REMARKS UPON A BOOK, &c.

Page 4. "WHETHER Lewis XIV. has such a power over Philip V.?" He speaks here of the unlimited, uncontrollable authority of fathers. A very foolish question; and his discourse hitherto, of government, weak and trivial, and liable to objections.

Ibid. "Whom he is to consider not as his own, but the Almighty's workmanship." A very likely consideration for the ideas of the state of nature. A very wrong deduction of paternal government; but that is nothing to the dispute, &c.

Page 12. "And as such might justly be punished by every one in the state of nature." False; he does not seem to understand the state of nature, although he has borrowed it from Hobbes, &c.

Page 14. "Merely speculative points, and other indifferent things," &c. And why are speculative opinions so insignificant? do not men proceed in their practice according to their speculations? so, if the author were a chancellor, and one of his specula-

tions were, that the poorer the clergy the better; would not that be of great use, if a cause came before him of tithes or church lands?

Ibid. "Which can only be known by examining whether men had any power in the state of nature over their own, or others' actions, in these matters." No, that is a wrong method, unless where religion has not been revealed; in natural religion, &c.

Ibid. "Nothing at first sight can be more obvious, than that, in all religious matters, none could make over the right of judging for himself, since that would cause his religion to be absolutely at the disposal of another." At his rate of arguing (I think I do not misrepresent him, and I believe he will not deny the consequence) a man may profess Heathenism, Mahometism, &c., gain as many proselytes as he can; and they may have their assemblies, and the magistrate ought to protect them, provided they do not disturb the state: and they may enjoy all secular preferments, be lords chancellors, judges, &c. But there are some opinions in several religions, which, although they do not directly make men rebel, yet lead to it. Nay, we might have temples for idols, &c. A thousand such absurdities follow from his general notions, and ill-digested schemes. And we see in the Old Testament, that kings were reckoned good or ill, as they suffered or hindered image-worship and idolatry, &c., which was limiting conscience.

Page 15. "Men may form what clubs, companies, or meetings they think fit, &c., which the magistrate, as long as the public sustains no damage, cannot hinder," &c. This is false; although the public sustain no damage, they will forbid clubs where they think danger may happen.

Page 16. "The magistrate is as much obliged to protect them in the way they choose of worshipping

him, as in any other indifferent matter."—Page 17. "The magistrate ought to treat all his subjects alike, how much soever they differ from him or one another in these matters." This shews, that although they be Turks, Jews, or Heathens, it is so. But we are sure Christianity is the only true religion, &c.; and therefore it should be the magistrate's chief care to propagate it; and that God should be worshipped in that form, that those who are the teachers think most proper, &c.

Page 18. "So that persecution is the most comprehensive of all crimes," &c. But he has not told us what is included in the idea of persecution. State it right.

Ibid. "But here it may be demanded, if a man's conscience make him do such acts," &c. This does not answer the above objection: For, if the public be not disturbed with atheistical principles preached, nor immoralities, all is well. So that still men may be Jews, Turks, &c.

Page 22. "The same reason which obliges them to make statutes of mortmain, and other laws, against the people's giving estates to the clergy, will equally hold for their taking them away when given. "A great security for property! Will this hold to any other society in the state, as merchants, &c., or only to ecclesiastics? A petty project: Forming general schemes requires a deeper head than this man's.

Ibid. "But the good of the society being the only reason of the magistrate's having any power over men's properties, I cannot see why he should deprive his subjects of any part thereof, for the maintenance of such opinions as have no tendency that way," &c. Here is a paragraph (vide also infra) which has a great deal in it. The meaning is, that no man ought to pay tithes, who does not believe what the minister preaches. But how came they by

this property? When they purchased the land, they paid only for so much; and tithes were exempted. It is an older title than any man's estate is; and if it were taken away to-morrow, it could not, without a new law, belong to the owners of the other nine parts, any more than impropriations do.

Ibid. "For the maintenance of such opinions, as no ways contribute to the public good." By such opinions as the public receive no advantage by, he must mean Christianity.

Page 23. "Who by reason of such articles are divided into different sects." A pretty cause of sects! &c.

Page 24. "So the same reason, as often as it occurs, will oblige him to leave that church." This is an excuse for his turning papist.

Ibid. "Unless you suppose churches like traps, easy to admit one; but when once he is in, there he must always stick, either for the pleasure or profit of the trap-setters." Remark his wit.

Page 29. "Nothing can be more absurd than maintaining there must be two independent powers in the same society," &c. This is abominably absurd; shew it.

Page 33. "The whole hierarchy as built on it, must necessarily fall to the ground, and great will be the fall of this spiritual Babylon." I will do him justice, and take notice, when he is witty, &c.

Page 36. "For if there may be two such [independent powers] in every society on earth, why may there not be more than one in heaven?" A delicate consequence.

Page 37. "Without having the less, he could not have the greater, in which that is contained." Sophistical; instance wherein.

Page 42. "Some since, subtler than the Jews, have managed commutations more to their own ad-

vantage, by enriching themselves, and beggaring, if Fame be not a liar, many an honest dissenter." It is fair to produce witnesses, is she a liar or not? The report is almost impossible. Commutations were contrived for roguish registers and proctors, and lay chancellors, but not for the clergy.

Page 43. "Kings and people, who (as the Indians do the devil) adored the Pope out of fear." I am in doubt, whether I shall allow that for wit or not, &c. Look you, in these cases, preface it thus: If one may use an old saying.

Page 44. "One reason why the clergy make what they call schism to be so heinous a sin." There it is now; because he has changed churches, he ridicules schism; as Milton wrote for divorces, because he had an ill wife. For ten pages on, we must give the true answer, that makes all these arguments of no use.

Page 60. "It possibly will be said, I have all this while been doing these gentlemen a great deal of wrong." To do him justice, he sets forth the objections of his adversaries with great strength, and much to their advantage. No doubt those are the very objections we would offer.

Page 68. "Their executioner." He is fond of this word in many places, yet there is nothing in it farther than it is the name for the hangman, &c.

Page 69. "Since they exclude both from having anything in the ordering of church matters." Another part of his scheme: for by this the people ought to execute ecclesiastical offices without distinction, for he brings the other opinion as an absurd one.

Page 72. "They claim a judicial power, and, by virtue of it, the government of the church, and thereby (pardon the expression) become traitors both to God and man." Who does he desire to pardon him? or is this meant of the English clergy? so it

seems. Does he desire to pardon him? they do it as Christians. Does he desire the government to do it? but then how can they make examples? He says, the clergy do so, &c.; so he means all.

Page 74. "I would gladly know what they mean by giving the Holy Ghost." Explain what is really meant by giving the Holy Ghost, like a king empowering an ambassador.*

Page 76. "The Popish clergy make very bold with the Three Persons of the Trinity." Why then don't mix them; but we see whom this glances on most. As to the *Congé d'élire*, and *Nolo episcopari*, not so absurd; and if omitted, why changed?

Page 78. "But not to digress"—Pray does he call scurrility upon the clergy a digression? The apology needless, &c.

Ibid. "A clergyman, it is said, is God's ambassador." But you know an ambassador may have a secretary, &c.

Ibid. "Call their pulpit speeches the word of God." That is a mistake.

Page 79. "Such persons to represent him." Are not they that own his power fitter to represent him than others? Would the author be a fitter person?

Ibid. "Puffed up with intolerable pride and insolence." Not at all; for where is the pride to be employed by a prince, whom so few own, and whose being is disputed by such as this author?

Ibid. "Perhaps from a poor servitor, &c., to be a prime minister in God's kingdom." That is right. God takes notice of the difference between poor servitors, &c. Extremely foolish—shew it. The argument lies strongly against the apostles, poor

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* See Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. § 77.

fishermen; and St. Paul, a tent-maker. So gross and idle!

Page 80. "The formality of laying hand over head on man." A pun; but an old one. I remember when Swan* made that pun first, he was severely checked for it.

Ibid. "What more is required to give one a right," &c. Here shew, what power is in the church, and what in the state, to make priests.

Page 85. "To bring men into, and not turn them out of, the ordinary way of salvation." Yes; but as one rotten sheep does mischief—and do you think it reasonable, that such a one as this author should converse with Christians, and weak ones?

Ibid. See his fine account of spiritual punishment.

Page 87. "The clergy affirm, that if they had not the power to exclude men from the church, its unity could not be preserved." So to expel an ill member from a college would be to divide the college; as in All Souls, &c. Apply it to him.

Page 88. "I cannot see but it is contrary to the rules of charity to exclude men from the church," &c. All this turns upon the falsest reasoning in the world. So, if a man be imprisoned for stealing a horse, he is hindered from other duties: And you might argue, that a man who does ill ought to be more diligent in minding other duties, and not to be debarred from them. It is for contumacy and rebellion against that power in the church which the law has confirmed. So a man is outlawed for a trifle, upon contumacy.

Page 92. "Obliging all by penal laws to receive the sacrament." This is false.

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* Captain Swan was a celebrated low humourist and punster, who frequented Will's Coffeehouse, when it was the fashionable resort of the men of wit and pleasure.

Page 93. "The want of which means can only harden a man in his impenitence." It is for his being hardened, that he is excluded. Suppose a son robs his father on the highway, and his father will not see him till he restores the money, and owns his fault. It is hard to deny him paying his duty in other things, &c. How absurd this!

Page 95. "And that only they had a right to give it." Another part of his scheme, that the people have a right to give the sacrament. See more of it, pp. 135 and 137.

Page 96. "Made familiar to such practices by the heathen priests." Well; and this shews the necessity of it for peace sake. A silly objection of this and other enemies to religion, to think to disgrace it by applying heathenism, which only concerns the political part, wherein they were as wise as others, and might give rules. Instance, in some, &c.

Page 98. "How differently from this to the great pretenders to primitive practice act," &c. This is a remarkable passage. Does he condemn or allow this mysterious way? It seems the first; and therefore these words are a little turned, but infallibly stood in the first draught as a great argument for popery.

Page 100. "They dress them up in a sanbenito." So, now we are to answer for the inquisition. One thing is, that he makes the fathers guilty of asserting most of the corruptions about the power of priests.

Page 104. "Some priests assume to themselves an arbitrary power of excluding men from the Lord's Supper." His scheme; that anybody may administer the sacraments, women, or children, &c.

Page 108. "One no more than another can be reckoned a priest." See his scheme. Here he dis-

graces what the law enacts, about the manner of consecrating, &c.

Page 118. "Churches serve to worse purposes than bear-gardens." This from Hudibras.

Page 119. "In the time of that wise heathen Ammianus Marcellinus." Here he runs down all Christianity in general.

Page 120. "I shall, in the following part of my discourse, shew that this doctrine is so far from serving the ends of religion, that, 1. It prevents the spreading of the gospel," &c. This independent power in the church is like the worms; being the cause of all diseases.

Page 124. "How easily could the Roman emperors have destroyed the church?" Just as if he had said, how easily could Herod kill Christ while a child, &c.

Page 125. "The people were set against bishops by reason of their tyranny." Wrong; for the bishops were no tyrants: their power was swallowed up by the Popes, and the people desired they should have more. It was the regulars that tyrannised and formed priestcraft. He is ignorant.

Page 139. "He is not bound by the laws of Christ to leave his friends in order to be baptized," &c. This directly against the gospel.—One would think him an emissary, by his preaching schism.

Page 142. "Then will the communion of saints be practicable, to which the principles of all parties, the occasional conformists only excepted, stand in direct opposition," &c. So that all are wrong but they. The Scripture is fully against schism. Tindal promotes it, and places in it all the present and future happiness of man.

Page 144. All he has hitherto said on this matter, with a very little turn, were arguments for Popery; for it is certain, that religion had share in very few

wars for many hundred years before the Reformation, because they were all of a mind. It is the ambition of rebels, preaching upon the discontents of sectaries, that they are not supreme, which has caused wars for religion. He is mistaken altogether. His little narrow understanding and want of learning.

Page 145. "Though some say the high-fliers' lives may serve for a very good rule, if men would act quite contrary to them." Is he one of those some? Beside the new turn of wit, &c., all the clergy in England come under his notion of high-fliers, as he states it.

Page 147. "None of them (churchmen) could be brought to acknowledge it lawful, upon any account whatever, to exclude the Duke of York." This account false in fact.

Ibid. "And the body-politic, whether ecclesiastical or civil, must be dealt with after the same manner as the body-natural." What, because it is called a body, and is a simile, must it hold in all circumstances?

Page 148. "We find all wise legislators have had regard to the tempers, inclinations, and prejudices," &c. This paragraph false.—It was directly contrary in several, as Lycurgus, &c.

Page 152. "All the skill of the prelatists is not able to discover the least distinction between bishop and presbyter." Yet, God knows, this hath been done many a time.

Page 158. "The Epistle to the Philippians is directed to the bishops and deacons; I mean in due order after the people, viz., to the saints, with their bishops and deacons." I hope he would argue from another place, that the people precede the king, because of these words—"Ye shall be destroyed, both you and your king."

Page 161. "The Pope, and other great church dons." I suppose he means bishops; but I wish he would explain himself, and not be so very witty in the midst of an argument; it is like two mediums, not fair in disputing.

Page 167. "Clemens Romanus blames the people, not for assuming a power, but for making a wrong use of it," &c. His great error all along is, that he does not distinguish between a power and a liberty of exercising that power, &c. I would appeal to any man, whether the clergy have not too little power, since a book like this, that unsettles foundations, and would destroy all, goes unpunished, &c.

Page 171. "By this, or some such method, the bishops obtained their power over their fellow presbyters, and both over the people. The whole tenor of the gospel directly contrary to it." Then it is not an allowable means: This carries it so far as to spoil his own system; it is a sin to have bishops as we have them.

Page 172. "The preservation of peace and unity, and not any divine right, was the reason of establishing a superiority of one of the presbyters over the rest; otherwise there would, as they say, have been as many schismatics as presbyters. No great compliment to the clergy of those days." Why so? It is the natural effect of a worse independency, which he keeps such a clatter about; an independency of churches on each other, which must naturally create schism.

Page 183. "How could the Christians have asserted the disinterestedness of those who first preached the gospel, particularly their having a right to the tenth part?" Yes, that would have passed easy enough; for they could not imagine teachers could live on air; and their heathen priests were much more unreasonable.

Page 184. "Men's suffering for such opinions is not sufficient to support the weight of them." This is a glance against Christianity. State the case of convert infidels; the converters are supposed few; the bulk of the priests must be of the converted country. It is their own people, therefore, they maintain. What project or end can a few converters propose? they can leave no power to their families, &c. State this, I say, at length, and give it a true turn. Princes give corporations power to purchase lands.

Page 187. "That it became an easy prey to the barbarous nations." Ignorance in Tindal. The empire long declined before Christianity was introduced. This a wrong cause, if ever there was one.

Page 190. "It is the clergy's interest to have religion corrupted." Quite the contrary; prove it. How is it the interest of the English clergy to corrupt religion? The more justice and piety the people have, the better it is for them; for that would prevent the penury of farmers, and the oppression of exacting, covetous landlords, &c. That which has corrupted religion is the liberty unlimited of professing all opinions. Do not lawyers render law intricate by their speculations, &c. And physicians, &c.

Page 209. "The spirit and temper of the clergy," &c. What does this man think the clergy are made of? Answer generally to what he says against councils in the ten pages before. Suppose I should bring quotations in their praise.

Page 211. "As the clergy, though few in comparison of the laity, were the inventors of corruptions." His scheme is, that the fewer and poorer the clergy, the better, and the contrary among the laity. A noble principle; and delicate consequences from it!

Page 207. "Men are not always condemned for the sake of opinions, but opinions sometimes for the sake of men." And so, he hopes, that if his opinions are condemned, people will think it is a spite against him, as having been always scandalous.

Page 210. "The meanest layman as good a judge as the greatest priest, for the meanest man is as much interested in the truth of religion as the greatest priest." As if one should say, the meanest sick man has as much interest in health as a physician, therefore is as good a judge of physic as a physician, &c.

Ibid. "Had synods been composed of laymen, none of those corruptions which tend to advance the interest of the clergy," &c. True. But the part the laity had in reforming, was little more than plundering. He should understand that the nature of things is this, that the clergy are made of men, and without some encouragement they will not have the best, but the worst.

Page 215. "They who gave estates to, rather than they who took them from, the clergy, were guilty of sacrilege." Then the people are the church, and the clergy not; another part of his scheme.

Page 219. "The clergy, as they subsisted by the alms of the people," &c. This he would have still. Shew the folly of it. Not possible to shew any civilized nation ever did it. Who would be clergymen then? The absurdity appears by putting the case, that none were to be statesmen, lawyers, or physicians, but who were to subsist by alms.

Page 222. "These subtle clergymen work their designs, who lately cut out such a tacking job for them," &c. He is mistaken—everybody was for

the bill almost, though not for the tack. The Bishop of Sarum was for it, as appears by his speech against it. But it seems, the tacking is owing to metaphysical speculations. I wonder whether is most perplexed, this author in his style, or the writings of our divines. In the judgment of all people, our divines have carried practical preaching and writing to the greatest perfection it ever arrived to; which shews, that we may affirm in general, our clergy is excellent, although this or that man be faulty. As if an army be constantly victorious, regular, &c., we may say, it is an excellent victorious army; but Tindal, to disparage it, would say, such a serjeant ran away; such an ensign hid himself in a ditch; nay, one colonel turned his back, therefore it is a corrupt, cowardly army, &c.

Page 224. "They were as apprehensive of the works of Aristotle, as some men are of the works of a late philosopher, which, they are afraid, will let too much light into the world." Yet just such another; only a commentator on Aristotle. People are likely to improve their understanding much with Locke: It is not his Human Understanding, but other works, that people dislike, although in that there are some dangerous tenets, as that of no innate ideas.

Page 226. "Could they, like the popish priests, add to this a restraint on the press, their business would be done." So it ought: For example, to hinder his book, because it is written to justify the vices and infidelity of the age. There can be no other design in it. For is this a way or manner to do good? railing does but provoke. The opinion of the whole parliament is, the clergy are too poor.

Ibid. "When some nations could be no longer

kept from prying into learning, this miserable gibberish of the schools was contrived." We have exploded schoolmen as much as he, and, in some people's opinion, too much, since the liberty of embracing any opinion is allowed; they following Aristotle, who is doubtless the greatest master of arguing in the world: but it has been a fashion of late years to explode Aristotle; and, therefore, this man has fallen into it like others, for that reason, without understanding him. Aristotle's poetry, rhetoric, and politics, are admirable; and, therefore, it is likely, so are his logics.

Page 230. "In these freer countries, as the clergy have less power, so religion is better understood, and more useful and excellent discourses are made on that subject," &c. Not generally. Holland not very famous; Spain has been, and France is. But it requires more knowledge than his, to form general rules, which people strain (when ignorant) to false deductions to make them out.

Page 232, Chap. VII. That this hypothesis of an independent power in any set of clergymen, makes all reformation unlawful, except where those who have this power, do consent. The title of this chapter, a Truism.

Page 234. "If God has not placed mankind, in respect to civil matters, under an absolute power, but has permitted them, in every society, to act as they judge best for their own safety," &c. Bad parallels; bad politics; want of due distinction between teaching and government. The people may know when they are governed well, but not be wiser than their instructors. Shew the difference.

Ibid. "If God has allowed the civil society these privileges, can we suppose he has less kindness for his church?" &c. Here they are distinguished, then; here it makes for him. It is a sort of turn of

expression, which is scarce with him, and he contradicts himself to follow it.

Page 235. "This cursed hypothesis had, perhaps, never been thought on, with relation to civils, had not the clergy (who have an inexhaustible magazine of oppressive doctrines) contrived first in ecclesiasticals," &c. The seventh paragraph furious and false. Were there no tyrants before the clergy? &c.

Page 236. "Therefore, in order to serve them, though I expect little thanks," &c. And why so? Will they not, as you say, follow their interest? I thought you said so. He has three or four spritely turns of this kind, that look as if he thought he had done wonders, and had put all the clergy in a ferment. Whereas, I do assure him, there are but two things wonderful in his book: First, how any man in a Christian country could have the boldness and wickedness to write it; and how any government would neglect punishing the author of it, if not as an enemy to religion, yet as a profligate trumpeter of sedition. These are hard words, got by reading his book.

Ibid. "The light of nature, as well as the gospel, obliges people to judge of themselves," &c., "to avoid false prophets, seducers," &c. The legislature can turn out a priest, and appoint another ready-made, but not make one; as you discharge a physician, and may take a farrier; but he is no physician, unless made as he ought to be.

Ibid. "Since no more power is required for the one than the other." That is, I dislike my physician, and can turn him off, therefore I can make any man a physician, &c. *Cujus est destruere*, &c. Jest on it: Therefore, because he lays schemes for destroying the church, we must employ him to raise it again. See what danger lies in applying maxims at

random. So, because it is the soldiers' business to knock men on the head, it is theirs likewise to raise them to life, &c.

Page 237. "It can belong only to the people to appoint their own ecclesiastical officers." This word, "people," is so delicious in him, that I cannot tell what is included in the idea of the "people." Does he mean the rabble, or the legislature, &c.? In this sense it may be true, that the legislature gives leave to the bishops to appoint, and they appoint themselves; I mean, the executive power appoints, &c. He shews his ignorance in government. As to high church, he carries it a prodigious way, and includes, in the idea of it, more than others will allow.

Page 239. "Though it be customary to admit none to the ministry who are not approved by the bishops or priests," &c. One of his principles to expose.

Ibid. "If every one has not an inherent right to choose his own guide, then a man must be either of the religion of his guide, or," &c. That would make delicate work in a nation: what would become of all our churches? They must dwindle into conventicles. Shew what would be the consequence of this scheme in several points. This great reformer, if his projects were reduced to practice, how many thousand sects, and consequently tumults, &c. Men must be governed in speculations, at least not suffered to vent them, because opinions tend to actions, which are most governed by opinions, &c. If those who write for the church writ no better, they would succeed but scurvily. But to see whether he be a good writer, let us see when he has published his second part.

Page 253. "An excellent author in his preface to the Account of Denmark." This man judges and writes much of a level. Molesworth's preface

full of stale profligate topics. That author wrote his book in spite to a nation, as this does to religion, and both, perhaps, on poor personal piques.*

Ibid. "By which means, and not by any difference in speculative matters, they are more rich and populous." As if ever anybody thought that a difference in speculative opinions made men richer or poorer; for example, &c.

Page 258. "Play the Devil for God's sake." If this is meant for wit, I would be glad to observe it; but in such cases I first look whether there be common sense, &c.

Page 261. "Christendom has been the scene of perpetual wars, massacres," &c. He does not consider, that most religious wars have been caused by schisms, when the dissenting parties were ready to join with any ambitious discontented man. The national religion always desires peace, even in her notions, for its interests.

Page 270. "Some have taken the liberty to compare a high church priest in politics, to a monkey in a glass-shop, where, as he can do no good, so he never fails of doing mischief enough." That is his modesty, it is his own simile, and it rather fits a man that does so and so, meaning himself. Besides, the comparison is foolish: so it is with men as with stags.

Page 276. "Their interest obliges them directly to promote tyranny." The matter is, that Christianity is the fault that spoils the priests, for they were like other men before they were priests. Among the Romans, priests did not do so; for they had the greatest power during the republic. I wonder he did not prove they spoiled Nero.

* Mr., afterwards Lord, Molesworth's Account of Denmark was severely animadverted upon by Dr. King, who pointed out many gross mistakes and misrepresentations.

Page 277. "No princes have been more insupportable, and done greater violence to the commonwealth, than those the clergy have honoured for saints and martyrs." For example, in our country, the princes most celebrated by our clergy are, &c. &c. &c. And the quarrels since the Conquest were nothing at all of the clergy, but purely of families, &c., wherein the clergy only joined like other men.

Page 279. "After the Reformation, I desire to know whether the conduct of the clergy was anyways altered for the better," &c. Monstrous misrepresentation! Does this man's spirit of declaiming let him forget all truth of fact, as here, &c.? Shew it. Or does he flatter himself, a time will come in future ages, that men will believe it on his word? In short, between declaiming, between misrepresenting, and falseness, and charging popish things, and independency, huddled together, his whole book is employed.

Set forth at large the necessity of union in religion, and the disadvantage of the contrary, and answer the contrary in Holland, where they have no religion, and are the worst constituted government in the world to last. It is ignorance of causes and appearances which makes shallow people judge so much to their advantage. They are governed by the administration and almost legislature of Holland, through advantage of property, nor are they fit to be set in balance with a noble kingdom, &c., like a man that gets an hundred pounds a year by hard labour, and one that has it in land.

Page 280. "It may be worth inquiring, whether the difference between the several sects in England," &c. A noble notion started, that union in the church must enslave the kingdom; reflect on it. This man has somewhere heard, that it is a point of wit to advance paradoxes, and the bolder the better.

But the wit lies in maintaining them, which he neglects, and forms imaginary conclusions from them, as if they were true and uncontested.

He adds, "That in the best constituted church, the greatest good which can be expected of the ecclesiastics, is, from their divisions." This is a maxim deduced from a gradation of false suppositions. If a man should turn the tables, and argue that all the debauchery, atheism, licentiousness, &c., of the times, were owing to the poverty of the clergy, &c., what would he say? There have been more wars of religion since the ruin of the clergy, than before, in England. All the civil wars before were from other causes.

Page 283. "Prayers are made in the loyal university of Oxford, to continue the throne free from the contagion of schism. See Mather's sermon on the 29th of May 1705." Thus he ridicules the university, while he is eating their bread.* The whole university comes with the most loyal addresses, yet that goes for nothing. If one indiscreet man drops an indiscreet word, all must answer for it.

Page 286. "By allowing all, who hold no opinions prejudicial to the state, and contribute equally with their fellow-subjects to its support, equal privileges in it." But who denies that of the dissenters? The Calvinist scheme one would not think proper for monarchy, Therefore, they fall in with the Scotch, Geneva, and Holland; and when they had strength here, they pulled down the monarchy. But I will tell an opinion they hold prejudicial to the state in his opinion; and that is, that they are against toleration, of which, if I do not shew him ten times more instances from their greatest writers,

* Tindal, as already mentioned, was a Fellow of All-Souls College.

than he can do of passive obedience among the clergy, I have done.

"Does not justice demand, that they who alike contribute to the burden, should alike receive the advantage?" Here is another of his maxims closely put, without considering what exceptions may be made. The papists have contributed doubly (being so taxed), therefore, by this rule, they ought to have double advantage. Protection in property, leave to trade and purchase, &c., are enough for a government to give. Employments in a state are a reward for those who entirely agree with it, &c. For example, a man who upon all occasions declared his opinion of a commonwealth to be preferable to a monarchy, would not be a fit man to have employments; let him enjoy his opinion, but not be in a capacity of reducing it to practice, &c.

Page 287. "There can be no alteration in the established mode of church discipline, which is not made in a legal way." Oh! but there are several methods to compass this legal way, by cunning, faction, industry. The common people, he knows, may be wrought upon by priests; these may influence the faction, and so compass a very pernicious law, and in a legal way ruin the state; as King Charles I. began to be ruined in a legal way, by passing bills, &c.

Page 288. "As everything is persecution which puts a man in a worse condition than his neighbours." It is hard to think sometimes whether this man is hired to write for, or against dissenters, and the sects. This is their opinion, although they will not own it so roundly. Let this be brought to practice: make a Quaker lord chancellor, who thinks paying tithes unlawful. And bring other instances to shew that several employments affect the church.

Ibid. "Great advantages which both church and

state have got by the kindness already shown to dissenters." Let them then be thankful for that. We humour children for their good sometimes, but too much may hurt. Observe that this 64th paragraph just contradicts the former. For, if we have advantage by kindness shewn dissenters, then there is no necessity of banishment or death.

Page 290. "Christ never designed the holy sacrament should be prostituted to serve a party. And that people should be bribed by a place to receive unworthily." Why, the business is, to be sure that those who are employed are of the national church; and the way to know it is by receiving the sacrament, which all men ought to do in their own church; and if not, are hardly fit for an office; and if they have those moral qualifications he mentions, joined to religion, no fear of receiving unworthily. And for this there might be a remedy: to take an oath that they are of the same principles, &c., for that is the end of receiving; and that it might be no bribe, the bill against occasional conformity would prevent entirely.

Ibid. "Preferring men not for their capacity, but their zeal to the church." The misfortune is, that if we prefer dissenters to great posts, they will have an inclination to make themselves the national church, and so there will be perpetual struggling; which case may be dangerous to the state. For, men are naturally wishing to get over others to their own opinion: witness this writer, who has published as singular and absurd notions as possible, yet has a mighty zeal to bring us over to them, &c.

Page 292. Here are two pages of scurrilous faction, with a deal of reflections on great persons. Under the notion of High-Churchmen, he runs down all uniformity and church government. Here is the whole lower house of convocation, which represents

the body of the clergy, and both universites, treated with rudeness, by an obscure, corrupt member, while he is eating their bread.

Page 294. "The reason why the middle sort of people retain so much of their ancient virtue, &c., is because no such pernicious notions are the ingredients of their education; which it is a sign are infinitely absurd, when so many of the gentry and nobility can, notwithstanding their prepossessions, get clear of them." Now the very same argument lies against religion, morality, honour and honesty; which are, it seems, but prejudices of education, and too many get clear of them. The middle sort of people have other things to mind than the factions of the age. He always assigns many causes, and sometimes with reason, since he makes imaginary effects. He quarrels at power being lodged in the clergy: when there is no reasonable Protestant, clergy or laity, who will not readily own the inconveniences by too great power and wealth, in any one body of men, ecclesiastics or seculars: but, on that account to weed up the wheat with the tares; to banish all religion, because it is capable of being corrupted; to give unbounded licence to all sects, &c.—And if heresies had not been used with some violence in the primitive age, we should have had, instead of true religion, the most corrupt one in the world.

Page 316. "The Dutch, and the rest of our presbyterian allies," &c. The Dutch will hardly thank him for this appellation. The French Huguenots, and Geneva Protestants themselves, and others, have lamented the want of episcopacy, and approved ours, &c. In this and the next paragraph, the author introduces the arguments he formerly used, when he turned papist in King James's time: and, loth to lose them, he gives them a new turn; and they

are the strongest in his book, at least have most artifice.

Page 333. "'Tis plain, all the power the bishops have, is derived from the people," &c. In general the distinction lies here. The permissive power of exercising jurisdiction lies in the people, or legislature, or administrator of a kingdom; but not of making him a bishop: as a physician that commences abroad, may be suffered to practise in London, or be hindered; but they have not the power of creating him a doctor, which is peculiar to a university. This is some allusion; but the thing is plain, as it seems to me, and wants no subterfuge, &c.

Page 338. "A journeyman bishop to ordain for him." Does any man think, that writing at this rate does the author's cause any service? is it his wit or his spleen that he cannot govern?

Page 364. "Can any have a right to an office, without having a right to do those things in which the office consists?" I answer, the ordination is valid. But a man may prudentially forbid to do some things: as a clergyman may marry without licence or banns; the marriage is good; yet he is punishable for it.

Page 368. "A choice made by persons who have no right to choose, is an error of the first concoction." That battered simile again! this is hard. I wish physicians had kept that a secret, it lies so ready for him to be witty with.

Page 370. "If prescription can make mere nullities to become good and valid, the laity may be capable of all manner of ecclesiastical power," &c. There is a difference; for, here the same way is kept, although there might be breaches; but it is quite otherwise, if you alter the whole method from what it was at first. We see bishops: there always were

bishops: it is the old way still. So a family is still held the same, although we are not sure of the purity of every one of the race.

Page 380. "It is said, that every nation is not a complete body politic within itself, as to ecclesiasticals. But the whole church, say they, composes such a body, and Christ is the head of it. But Christ's headship makes Christians no more one body politic with respect to ecclesiasticals than to civils." Here we must shew the reason and necessity of the church being a corporation all over the world: to avoid heresies, and preserve fundamentals, and hinder the corrupting of Scripture, &c. But there are no such necessities in government, to be the same everywhere, &c. It is something like the colleges in a university; they are all independent, yet joined, are one body. So a general council consisteth of many persons independent of one another, &c.

However, there is such a thing as *jus gentium*, &c. And he that is doctor of physic, or law, is so in any university of Europe, like the *Respublica Literaria*. Nor to me does there seem anything contradicting, or improper, in this notion of the catholic church; and for want of such a communion, religion is so much corrupted, and would be more, if there were not more communion in this than in civils. It is of no import to mankind how nations are governed; but the preserving the purity of religion is best held up by endeavouring to make it one body over the world. Something like as there is in trade. So to be able to communicate with all Christians we come among is at least to be wished and aimed at as much as we can.

Page 384. "In a word, if the bishops are not supreme," &c. Here he reassumes his arguments for popery, that there cannot be a body politic of the church through the whole world, without a

visible head to have recourse to. These were formerly writ to advance popery, and now to put an absurdity upon the hypothesis of a catholic church. As they say in Ireland, in King James's time they built mass-houses, which we make very good barns of.

Page 388. "Bishops are under a premunire, obliged to confirm and consecrate the person named in the *congé d'élire*." This perhaps is complained of. He is permitted to do it. We allow the legislature may hinder, if they please; as they may turn out Christianity, if they think fit.

Page 389. "It is the magistrate who empowers them to do more for other bishops that they can for themselves, since they cannot appoint their own successors." Yes, they could, if the magistrate would let them. Here is an endless splutter, and a parcel of perplexed distinctions upon no occasion. All that the clergy pretend to, is a right of qualifying men for the ministry, something like what a university doth with degrees. This power they claim from God, and that the civil power cannot do it as pleasing to God without them; but they may choose whether they will suffer it or not. A religion cannot be crammed down a nation's throat against their will; but when they receive a religion, it is supposed they receive it as their converters give it; and upon that foot, they cannot justly mingle their own methods, that contradict that religion, &c.

Page 390. "With us the bishops act only ministerially, and by virtue of the regal commission, by which the prince firmly enjoins and commands them to proceed in choosing, confirming, and consecrating," &c. Suppose we held it unlawful to do so: how can we help it? But does that make it rightful, if it be not so? Suppose the author lived in a

heathen country, where a law would be made to call Christianity idolatrous; would that be a topic for him to prove it so by, &c. And why do the clergy incur a premunire? to frighten them? Because the law understandeth, that, if they refuse, the chosen cannot be a bishop. But, if the clergy had order to do it otherwise than they have prescribed, they ought and would incur a hundred rather.

Page 402. "I believe the catholic church," &c. Here he ridicules the Apostles' Creed. Another part of his scheme. By what he says in these pages, it is certain, his design is either to run down Christianity, or set up popery; the latter it is more charitable to think, and, from his past life, highly probable.

Page 405. "That which gave the papists so great advantage was, clergymen talking so very inconsistent with themselves," &c. State the difference here between our separation from Rome, and the dissenters from us, and shew the falseness of what he says. I wish he would tell us what he leaves for a clergyman to do, if he may not instruct the people in religion, and if they should not receive his instructions.

Page 411. "The restraint of the press a badge of popery." Why is that a badge of popery? why not restrain the press to those who would confound religion, as in civil matters? But this toucheth himself. He would starve perhaps, &c. Let him get some honester livelihood then. It is plain, all his arguments against constraint, &c., favour the papists as much as dissenters; for both have opinions that may affect the peace of the state.

Page 413. "Since this discourse," &c. And

must we have another volume on this one subject of independency? or, is it to fright us? I am not of Dr. Hickes's mind, *Qu'il vient.* I pity the readers, and the clergy that must answer it, be it ever so insipid. Reflect on this sarcastic conclusion, &c.

MR. COLLINS'S DISCOURSE

OF

FREETHINKING;

PUT INTO PLAIN ENGLISH,

BY WAY OF ABSTRACT,

FOR THE USE OF THE POOR.

BY A FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR.

FIRST PRINTED IN 1713.

ANTHONY COLLINS, the celebrated Deist, who, notwithstanding his sceptical opinions, retained the friendship of Locke, published, in 1713, his "Discourse of Freethinking, occasioned by the Rise and Growth of a Sect called Freethinkers." It is believed to have been printed at the Hague, though the title-page bears London. Like Tindal, Collins pretended only to assail the encroachments of the Pagan and of the Romish priesthood, while his real drift was to undervalue and bring to contempt the established clergy of all countries and ages, to ridicule the Mosaical law, to weaken the evidences of revealed religion, and even to controvert, by insinuation at least, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The treatise attracted much notice, and drew forth an host of answerers, among whom Whiston, Hare, Hoadley, and Bentley, were most conspicuous.

Swift also mingled in the controversy, yet rather with a political than a religious view. For, although the politics of the learned

men and divines above-mentioned were opposite to his own, he has not hesitated, in his ironical defence of Collins, to assume the character of a Whig, as if to identify the deistical opinions of that author with those of the opponents of the Tory ministry. What gave a colour, though only a colour, to this charge was, that Toland, Tindal, Collins, and most of those who carried to licence their abhorrence of church-government, were naturally enough enrolled among that party in politics who professed most attachment to freedom of sentiment; and in this, as in many other cases, the vices, or scandalous opinions, of a small part of a political body, were unjustly held up as its general characteristics. Swift himself had reason loudly to complain of similar treatment in the succeeding reign, when, because the Jacobites were the enemies of government, all who opposed the ministry were called Jacobites. Laying aside consideration of this ungenerous advantage, the treatise is in itself most admirable.

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INTRODUCTION.

OUR party having failed, by all their political arguments, to re-establish their power, the wise leaders have determined that the last and principal remedy should be made use of for opening the eyes of this blinded nation; and that a short, but perfect, system of their divinity should be published, to which we are all of us ready to subscribe, and which we lay down as a model, bearing a close analogy to our schemes in religion. Crafty, designing men, that they might keep the world in awe, have, in their several forms of government, placed a supreme power on earth, to keep humankind in fear of being hanged; and a supreme power in heaven, for fear of being damned. In order to cure men's apprehensions of the former, several of our learned members have written many profound treatises on anarchy; but a brief complete body of Atheology seemed yet wanting till this irrefragable discourse appeared.

However, it so happens, that our ablest brethren, in their elaborate disquisitions upon this subject, have written with so much caution that ignorant unbelievers have edified very little by them. I grant that those daring spirits, who first adventured to write against the direct rules of the gospel, the current of antiquity, the religion of the magistrate, and the laws of the land, had some measures to keep; and particularly when they railed at religion, were in the right to use little artful disguises, by which a jury could only find them guilty of abusing heathenism or popery. But the mystery is now revealed, that there is no such thing as mystery or revelation; and though our friends are out of place and power, yet we may have so much confidence in the present ministry, to be secure, that those who suffer so many free speeches against their sovereign and themselves, to pass unpunished, will never resent our expressing the freest thoughts against their religion; but think with Tiberius, that, if there be a God, he is able enough to revenge any injuries done to himself, without expecting the civil power to interpose.

By these reflections I was brought to think, that the most ingenious author of the Discourse upon Freethinking, in a letter to Somebody, esq., although he has used less reserve than any of his predecessors, might yet have been more free and open. I considered that several well-willers to infidelity, might be discouraged by a show of logic, and a multiplicity of quotations, scattered through his book; which, to understandings of that size, might carry an appearance of something like book-learning, and consequently fright them from reading for their improvement. I could see no reason why these great discoveries should be hid from our youth of quality, who frequent White's and Tom's; why they

should not be adapted to the capacities of the Kit-Cat and Hanover Clubs, who might then be able to read lectures on them to their several toasts: and it will be allowed on all hands, that nothing can sooner help to restore our abdicated cause, than a firm universal belief of the principles laid down by this sublime author: for I am sensible that nothing would more contribute to "the continuance of the war," and the restoration of the late ministry, than to have the doctrines delivered in this treatise well infused into the people. I have therefore compiled them into the following Abstract, wherein I have adhered to the very words of our author; only adding some few explanations of my own, where the terms happen to be too learned, and consequently a little beyond the comprehension of those for whom the work was principally intended, I mean the nobility and gentry of our party: after which, I hope, it will be impossible for the malice of a jacobite, high-flying, priest-ridden faction, to misrepresent us. The few additions I have made are for no other use than to help the transition, which could not otherwise be kept in an abstract: but I have not presumed to advance anything of my own; which, besides, would be needless to an author who has so fully handled and demonstrated every particular. I shall only add, that though this writer, when he speaks of priests, desires chiefly to be understood to mean the English clergy; yet he includes all priests whatsoever, except the ancient and modern heathens, the Turks, Quakers, and Socinians.

THE LETTER.

SIR,

I SEND you this apology for Freethinking,* without the least hopes of doing good, but purely to comply with your request; for those truths which nobody can deny, will do no good to those who deny them. The clergy, who are so impudent to teach the people the doctrines of faith, are all either cunning knaves or mad fools; for none but artificial, designing men, and crack-brained enthusiasts, presume to be guides to others in matters of speculation, which all the doctrines of Christianity are; and whoever has a mind to learn the Christian religion, naturally chooses such knaves and fools to teach them. Now the Bible, which contains the precepts of the priests' religion, is the most difficult book in the world to be understood: it requires a thorough knowledge in natural, civil, ecclesiastical history, law, husbandry, sailing, physic, pharmacy, mathematics, metaphysics, ethics, and everything else that can be named: and everybody who believes it ought to understand it, and must do so by force of his own freethinking, without any guide or instructor.

How can a man think at all, if he does not think freely? A man who does not eat and drink freely, does not eat and drink at all. Why may not I be denied the liberty of freeseeing as well as freethinking? Yet nobody pretends that the first is unlawful, for a cat may look on a king; though you

* The chief strain of Collins's Discourse is an eulogium upon the necessity and advantage of Freethinking; in which it is more than insinuated, that the advocates of revealed religion are enemies to the progress of enlightened inquiry. This insidious position is ridiculed in the following parody.

be near-sighted, or have weak or sore eyes, or are blind, you may be a freeseer; you ought to see for yourself, and not trust to a guide to choose the colour of your stockings, or save you from falling into a ditch.

In like manner, there ought to be no restraint at all on thinking freely upon any proposition, however impious or absurd. There is not the least hurt in the wickedest thoughts, provided they be free; nor in telling those thoughts to everybody, and endeavouring to convince the world of them; for all this is included in the doctrine of freethinking, as I shall plainly shew you in what follows; and therefore you are all along to understand the word freethinking in this sense.

If you are apt to be afraid of the devil, think freely of him, and you destroy him and his kingdom. Freethinking has done him more mischief than all the clergy in the world ever could do: they believe in the devil, they have an interest in him, and therefore are the great supports of his kingdom. The devil was in the States-General before they began to be freethinkers: for England and Holland * were formerly the Christian territories of the devil. I told you how he left Holland; and freethinking and the revolution banished him from England; I defy all the clergy to shew me when they ever had such success against him. My meaning is, that to think freely of the devil is to think there is no devil at all; and he that thinks so, the devil is in him if he be afraid of the devil.

But, within these two or three years, the devil has come into England again; and Dr. Sacheverell has given him commission to appear in the shape of a

* Collins is supposed to have imbibed his freethinking philosophy during his repeated visits to Holland.

cat, and carry old women about upon broomsticks: and the devil has now so many "ministers ordained to his service," that they have rendered freethinking odious, and nothing but the second coming of Christ can restore it.

The priests tell me, I am to believe the Bible; but freethinking tells me otherwise in many particulars. The Bible says, the Jews were a nation favoured by God; but I, who am a freethinker, say, that cannot be, because the Jews lived in a corner of the earth, and freethinking makes it clear that those who live in corners cannot be favourites of God. The New Testament all along asserts the truth of Christianity; but freethinking denies it: because Christianity was communicated but to a few; and whatever is communicated but to a few, cannot be true; for that is like whispering, and the proverb says, "that there is no whispering without lying."

Here is a society in London for propagating freethinking throughout the world, encouraged and supported by the Queen and many others. You say, perhaps, it is for propagating the gospel. Do you think the missionaries we send will tell the heathens that they must not think freely? No, surely; why then, it is manifest, those missionaries must be freethinkers, and make the heathens so too. But why should not the king of Siam, whose religion is heathenism and idolatry, send over a parcel of his priests to convert us to his church, as well as we send missionaries there? Both projects are exactly of a piece, and equally reasonable; and if those heathen priests were here, it would be our duty to hearken to them, and think freely whether they may not be in the right rather than we. I heartily wish a detachment of such divines as Dr. Atterbury, Dr. Smallridge, Dr. Swift, Dr. Sacheverell, and some

others, were sent every year to the farthest part of the heathen world, and that we had a cargo of their priests in return, who would spread freethinking among us. Then the war would go on, the late ministry be restored, and faction cease; which our priests inflame by haranguing upon texts, and falsely call that "preaching the gospel."

I have another project in my head, which ought to be put in execution, in order to make us free-thinkers. It is a great hardship and injustice, that our priests must not be disturbed while they are prating in the pulpit. For example: why should not William Penn the Quaker, or any Anabaptist, Papist, Muggletonian, Jew, or sweet-singer, have liberty to come into St. Paul's church, in the midst of divine service, and endeavour to convert first the alderman, then the preacher, and singing-men? or pray, why might not poor Mr. Whiston,* who denies the divinity of Christ, be allowed to come into the lower house of convocation, and convert the clergy? But, alas! we are overrun with such false notions, that, if Penn or Whiston should do their duty, they would be reckoned fanatics, and disturbers of the holy synod; although they have as good a title to it as St. Paul had to go into the synagogues of the Jews; and their authority is full as divine as his.

Christ himself commands us to be freethinkers; for he bids us search the scriptures, and take heed what and whom we hear: by which he plainly warns us, not to believe our bishops and clergy; for Jesus Christ, when he considered that all the Jewish and heathen priests, whose religion he came to abolish, were his enemies, rightly concluded that those

* Yet Whiston, who receives this side-cut, was himself an anxious combatant of Collins, in his Reflections on an Anonymous Pamphlet, entitled, a Defence of Freethinking. 1713.

appointed by him to preach his own gospel would probably be so too; and could not be secure that any set of priests, of the faith he delivered, would ever be otherwise: therefore it is fully demonstrated that the clergy of the church of England are mortal enemies to Christ, and ought not to be believed.

But, without the privilege of freethinking, how is it possible to know which is the right scripture? Here are perhaps twenty sorts of scriptures in the several parts of the world, and every set of priests contend that their scripture is the true one. The Indian bramins have a book of scripture called the Shaster; the persees their Zundivastaw; the bonzes in China have theirs, written by the disciples of Fohe, whom they call "God and Saviour of the world, who was born to teach the way of salvation, and to give satisfaction for all men's sins:" which, you see, is directly the same with what our priests pretend of Christ. And must we not think freely, to find out which are in the right, whether the bishops or the bonzes? But the talapoins, or heathen clergy of Siam, approach yet nearer to the system of our priests; they have a book of scripture written by Sommonocodam, who, the Siamese say, was "born of a virgin," and was "the God expected by the universe;" just as our priests tell us, that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and was the Messiah so long expected. The Turkish priests, or dervises, have their scripture, which they call the Alcoran. The Jews have the Old Testament for their scripture, and the Christians have both the Old and the New. Now, among all these scriptures, there cannot above one be right; and how is it possible to know which is that, without reading them all, and then thinking freely, every one of us for ourselves, without following the advice or instruction of any guide, before we venture to choose? The parlia-

ment ought to be at the charge of finding a sufficient number of the scriptures, for every one of her majesty's subjects; for, there are twenty to one against us, that we may be in the wrong: but a great deal of freethinking will at last set us all right, and every one will adhere to the scripture he likes best; by which means, religion, peace, and wealth, will be for ever secured in her Majesty's realms.

And it is the more necessary that the good people of England should have liberty to choose some other scripture, because all Christian priests differ so much about the copies of theirs, and about the various readings of the several manuscripts, which quite destroys the authority of the Bible: for what authority can a book pretend to, where there are various readings?* And for this reason, it is manifest that no man can know the opinions of Aristotle or Plato, or believe the facts related by Thucydides or Livy, or to be pleased with the poetry of Homer and Virgil, all which books are utterly useless, upon account of their various readings. Some books of scripture are said to be lost, and this utterly destroys the credit of those that are left: some we reject, which the Africans and Copticks receive; and why may we not think freely, and reject the rest? Some think the scriptures wholly inspired, some partly; and some not at all. Now this is just the very case of the bramins, persees, bonzes, talapoins, dervises, rabbis, and all other priests, who build their religion upon books, as our priests do upon their Bibles. They all equally differ about the copies, various readings and inspirations, of their several scriptures; and God knows

* In the discourse of Freethinking, p. 80, Collins insists much on a passage in Victor of Tunis, from which he infers that the gospels were corrected and altered in the fourth century.

which are in the right: freethinking alone can determine it.

It would be endless to shew in how many particulars the priests of the heathen and Christian churches differ about the meaning even of those scriptures which they universally receive as sacred. But, to avoid prolixity, I shall confine myself to the different opinions among the priests of the church of England; and here only give you a specimen, because even these are too many to be enumerated.

I have found out a bishop, (though indeed his opinions are condemned by all his brethren,) who allows the scriptures to be so difficult, that God has left them rather as a trial of our industry, than a repository of our faith, and furniture of creeds and articles of belief; with several other admirable schemes of freethinking, which you may consult at your leisure.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the most fundamental point of the whole Christian religion. Nothing is more easy to a freethinker: yet what different notions of it do the English priests pretend to deduce from scripture, explaining it by "specific unities, eternal modes of subsistence," and the like unintelligible jargon! Nay, it is a question whether this doctrine be fundamental or not; for though Dr. South and Bishop Bull affirm it, yet Bishop Taylor and Dr. Wallis deny it. And that excellent freethinking prelate Bishop Taylor observes, that Athanasius's example was followed with too much greediness: by which means it has happened, that the greater number of our priests are in that sentiment, and think it necessary to believe the Trinity, and incarnation of Christ.*

* See Swift's opinion of controversies on this subject in his Sermon upon the Trinity.

Our priests likewise dispute several circumstances about the resurrection of the dead, the nature of our bodies after the resurrection, and in what manner they shall be united to our souls. They also attack one another "very weakly, with great vigour," about predestination. And it is certainly true, (for Bishop Taylor and Mr. Whiston the Socinian say so,) that all churches in prosperity alter their doctrines every age, and are neither satisfied with themselves nor their own confessions; neither does any clergyman of sense believe the Thirty-nine Articles.

Our priests differ about the eternity of hell torments. The famous Dr. Henry More, and the most pious and rational of all priests, Dr. Tillotson, (both freethinkers,) believe them to be not eternal. They differ about keeping the sabbath, the divine right of episcopacy, and the doctrine of original sin; which is the foundation of the whole Christian religion; for if men are not liable to be damned for Adam's sin, the Christian religion is an imposture: yet this is now disputed among them; so is lay baptism: so was formerly the lawfulness of usury; but now the priests are common stock-jobbers, attorneys, and scriveners. In short, there is no end of disputing among priests: and therefore I conclude, that there ought to be no such thing in the world as priests, teachers, or guides, for instructing ignorant people in religion; but that every man ought to think freely for himself.

I will tell you my meaning in all this. The priests dispute every point in the Christian religion, as well as almost every text in the Bible; and the force of my argument lies here, that whatever point is disputed by one or two divines, however condemned by the church, not only that particular point, but the whole article to which it relates, may lawfully be received or rejected by any freethinker.

For instance, suppose More and Tillotson deny the eternity of hell torments, a freethinker may deny all future punishments whatsoever. The priests dispute about explaining the Trinity; therefore a freethinker may reject one or two, or the whole three persons; at least, he may reject Christianity, because the Trinity is the most fundamental doctrine of that religion. So I affirm original sin, and that men are now liable to be damned for Adam's sin, to be the foundation of the whole Christian religion; but this point was formerly, and is now, disputed; therefore, a freethinker may deny the whole. And I cannot help giving you one farther direction, how I insinuate all along, that the wisest freethinking priests, whom you may distinguish by the epithets I bestow on them, were those who differed most from the generality of their brethren.

But, besides, the conduct of our priests in many other points makes freethinking unavoidable; for some of them own that the doctrines of the church are contradictory to one another, as well as to reason; which I thus prove: Dr. Sacheverell says, in his speech at his trial, "That, by abandoning passive obedience, we must render ourselves the most inconsistent church in the world;" *ergo*, there must have been a great many inconsistencies and contradictory doctrines in the church before. Dr. South describes the incarnation of Christ as an astonishing mystery, impossible to be conceived by man's reason; *ergo*, it is contradictory to itself, and to reason, and ought to be exploded by all freethinkers.

Another instance of the priests' conduct, which multiplies freethinkers, is their acknowledgment of abuses, defects, and false doctrines, in the church; particularly that of eating black pudding, which is so plainly forbid in the Old and New Testament,

that I wonder those who pretend to believe a syllable in either will presume to taste it. Why should I mention the want of discipline, and of a sideboard at the altar, with complaints of other great abuses and defects made by some of the priests, which no man can think on without freethinking, and consequently rejecting Christianity?

When I see an honest freethinking bishop endeavour to destroy the power and privileges of the church, and Dr. Atterbury angry with him for it, and calling it "dirty work:" what can I conclude, by virtue of being a freethinker, but that Christianity is all a cheat?

Mr. Whiston has published several tracts, wherein he absolutely denies the divinity of Christ. A bishop tells him, "Sir, in any matter where you have the church's judgment against you, you should be careful not to break the peace of the church, by writing against it, though you are sure you are in the right." * Now my opinion is directly contrary; and I affirm, that if ten thousand freethinkers thought differently from the received doctrine, and from each other, they would be all in duty bound to publish their thoughts, provided they were all sure of being in the right, though it broke the peace of the church and state ten thousand times.

And here I must take leave to tell you, although you cannot but have perceived it from what I have already said, and shall be still more amply convinced by what is to follow, that freethinking signifies nothing, without freespeaking and freewriting. It is the indispensable duty of a freethinker, to endea-

* Swift's Sermon on the Trinity, as well as a passage in his Thoughts upon Religion, shews the weight which he attached to this important argument.

vour forcing all the world to think as he does, and by that means make them freethinkers too. You are also to understand, that I allow no man to be a freethinker, any farther than as he differs from the received doctrines of religion. Where a man falls in, though by perfect chance, with what is generally believed, he is in that point a confined and limited thinker; and you shall see by and by that I celebrate those for the noblest freethinkers in every age, who differed from the religion of their countries in the most fundamental points, and especially in those which bear any analogy to the chief fundamentals of religion among us.

Another trick of the priests is, to charge all men with atheism, who have more wit than themselves; which, therefore, I expect, will be my case for writing this discourse. This is what makes them so implacable against Mr. Gildon, Dr. Tindal, Mr. Toland, and myself; and when they call us wits atheists, it provokes us to be freethinkers.

Again: the priests cannot agree when their scripture was written. They differ about the number of canonical books, and the various readings. Now, those few among us who understand Latin, are careful to tell this to our disciples, who presently fall a-freethinking, that the Bible is a book not to be depended upon in anything at all.

There is another thing, that mightily spreads freethinking, which, I believe, you would hardly guess. The priests have got a way of late of writing books against freethinking; I mean, treatises in dialogue, where they introduce atheists, deists, sceptics, and Socinians, offering their several arguments. Now, these freethinkers are too hard for the priests themselves in their own books. And how can it be otherwise? For, if the arguments usually offered by atheists are fairly represented in

these books, they must needs convert everybody that reads them; because atheists, deists, sceptics, and Socinians, have certainly better arguments to maintain their opinions, than any the priests can produce to maintain the contrary.

Mr. Creech, a priest, translated Lucretius into English, which is a complete system of atheism; and several young students, who were afterward priests, wrote verses in praise of this translation. The arguments against Providence in that book are so strong that they have added mightily to the number of freethinkers.

Why should I mention the pious cheats of the priests, who in the New Testament translate the word *ecclesia* sometimes the *church*, and sometimes the *congregation;* and *episcopus* sometimes a *bishop*, and sometimes an *overseer?* A priest, translating a book, left out a whole passage that reflected on the king, by which he was an enemy to political freethinking, a most considerable branch of our system. Another priest, translating a book of travels, left out a lying miracle, out of mere malice, to conceal an argument for freethinking. In short, these frauds are very common in all books which are published by priests. But, however, I love to excuse them whenever I can: and as to this accusation, they may plead the authority of the ancient fathers of the church, for forgery, corruption, and mangling authors, with more reason than for any of their articles of faith. St. Jerom, St. Hilary, Eusebius Vercellensis, Victorinus, and several others, were all guilty of arrant forgery and corruption: for, when they translated the works of several freethinkers, whom they called heretics, they omitted all their heresies or freethinkings, and had the impudence to own it to the world.

From these many notorious instances of the priests'

conduct, I conclude they are not to be relied on in any one thing relating to religion; but that every man must think freely for himself.

But to this it may be objected, that the bulk of mankind is as well qualified for flying as thinking; and if every man thought it his duty to think freely, and trouble his neighbour with his thoughts, (which is an essential part of freethinking,) it would make wild work in the world. I answer; whoever cannot think freely, may let it alone if he pleases, by virtue of his right to think freely; that is to say, if such a man freely thinks that he cannot think freely, of which every man is a sufficient judge, why, then, he need not think freely unless he thinks fit.

Besides, if the bulk of mankind cannot think freely in matters of speculation, as the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, &c., why, then, freethinking is indeed no duty: but then the priests must allow, that men are not concerned to believe whether there is a God or not. But still those who are disposed to think freely, may think freely if they please.

It is again objected, that freethinking will produce endless divisions in opinion, and by consequence disorder society. To which I answer,

When every single man comes to have a different opinion every day from the whole world, and from himself, by virtue of freethinking, and thinks it his duty to convert every man to his own freethinking, as all we freethinkers do; how can that possibly create so great a diversity of opinions, as to have a set of priests agree among themselves to teach the same opinions in their several parishes to all who will come to hear them? Besides, if all people were of the same opinion, the remedy would be worse than the disease; I will tell you the reason some other time.

Besides, difference in opinion, especially in matters of great moment, breeds no confusion at all. Witness papist and protestant, roundhead and cavalier, and whig and tory, now among us. I observe, the Turkish empire is more at peace within itself than Christian princes are with one another. Those noble Turkish virtues of charity and toleration are what contribute chiefly to the flourishing state of that happy monarchy. There Christians and Jews are tolerated, and live at ease, if they can hold their tongues and think freely, provided they never set foot within the mosques, nor write against Mahomet. A few plunderings now and then by the janissaries are all they have to fear.

It is objected, that by freethinking, men will think themselves into atheism; and indeed I have allowed all along that atheistical books convert men to freethinking. But suppose that to be true, I can bring you two divines, who affirm superstition and enthusiasm to be worse than atheism, and more mischievous to society: and in short, it is necessary that the bulk of the people should be atheists or superstitious.

It is objected, that priests ought to be relied on by the people, as lawyers and physicians, because it is their faculty. I answer, It is true, a man who is no lawyer, is not suffered to plead for himself. But every man may be his own quack if he pleases, and he only ventures his life; but in the other case, the priest tells him he must be damned: therefore do not trust the priest, but think freely for yourself; and if you happen to think there is no hell, there certainly is none, and consequently you cannot be damned. I answer farther, that wherever there is no lawyer, physician, or priest, the country is paradise. Besides, all priests, (except the orthodox, and those are not ours, nor any that I know,) are

hired by the public to lead men into mischief: but lawyers and physicians are not; you hire them yourself.

It is objected, (by priests, no doubt, but I have forgot their names,) that false speculations are necessary to be imposed upon men, in order to assist the magistrate in keeping the peace; and that men ought therefore to be deceived, like children, for their own good. I answer, That zeal for imposing speculations, whether true or false, (under which name of speculations I include all opinions of religion, as the belief of a God, providence, immortality of the soul, future rewards and punishments, &c.,) has done more hurt than it is possible for religion to do good. It puts us to the charge of maintaining ten thousand priests in England, which is a burden upon society never felt upon any other occasion: and a greater evil to the public, than if these ecclesiastics were only employed in the most innocent offices of life, which I take to be eating and drinking. Now, if you offer to impose anything on mankind beside what relates to moral duties, as to pay your debts, not pick pockets, nor commit murder, and the like; that is to say, if, beside this, you oblige them to believe in God and Jesus Christ, what you add to their faith will take just so much off from their morality. By this argument it is manifest, that a perfect moral man must be a perfect atheist; every inch of religion he gets loses him an inch of morality: for there is a certain *quantum* belongs to every man, of which there is nothing to spare. This is clear from the common practice of all our priests: they never once preach to you to love your neighbour, to be just in your dealings, or to be sober and temperate. The streets of London are full of common whores, publicly tolerated in their wickedness; yet the priests make no complaints against this enormity, either

from the pulpit or the press: I can affirm, that neither you nor I, sir, have ever heard one sermon against whoring since we were boys. No, the priests allow all these vices, and love us the better for them, provided we will promise not "to harangue upon a text," nor to sprinkle a little water in a child's face, which they call baptizing, and would engross it all to themselves.

Besides, the priests engage all the rogues, villains, and fools, in their party, in order to make it as large as they can: by this means they seduced Constantine the Great over to their religion, who was the first Christian emperor, and so horrible a villain, that the heathen priests told him they could not expiate his crimes in their church; so he was at a loss to know what to do, till an Ægyptian bishop assured him, that there was no villainy so great, but was to be expiated by the sacraments of the Christian religion: upon which he became a Christian, and to him that religion owes its first settlement.

It is objected, that freethinkers themselves are the most infamous, wicked, and senseless, of all mankind.

I answer, first, we say the same of priests, and other believers. But the truth is, men of all sects are equally good and bad; for no religion whatsoever contributes in the least to mend men's lives.

I answer, secondly, that freethinkers use their understanding; but those who have religion do not: therefore the first have more understanding than the others; witness Toland, Tindal, Gildon, Clendon, Coward, and myself. For, use legs, and have legs.

I answer, thirdly, that freethinkers are the most virtuous persons in the world; for all freethinkers must certainly differ from the priests, and from nine hundred and ninety-nine of a thousand of those among whom they live; and are, therefore, virtuous, of course, because everybody hates them.

I answer, fourthly, that the most virtuous people, in all ages, have been freethinkers; of which I shall produce several instances.*

Socrates was a freethinker; for he disbelieved the gods of his country, and the common creeds about them, and declared his dislike when he heard men attribute "repentance, anger, and other passions to the gods, and talk of wars and battles in heaven, and of the gods getting women with child," and such like fabulous and blasphemous stories. I pick out these particulars, because they are the very same with what the priests have in their Bibles, where repentance and anger are attributed to God; where it is said, there was "war in heaven;" and that "the Virgin Mary was with child by the Holy Ghost," whom the priests call God; all fabulous and blasphemous stories. Now, I affirm Socrates to have been a true Christian. You will ask, perhaps, how that can be, since he lived three or four hundred years before Christ? I answer, with Justin Martyr, that Christ is nothing else but reason; and I hope you do not think Socrates lived before reason. Now, this true Christian Socrates never made notions, speculations, or mysteries, any part of his religion; but demonstrated all men to be fools who troubled themselves with inquiries into heavenly things. Lastly, it is plain that Socrates was a freethinker, because he was calumniated for an atheist, as freethinkers generally are, only because he was an enemy to all speculations and inquiries into heavenly things. For I argue thus, that if I never trouble myself to think whether there be a God or

* What follows is in ridicule of a long list of freethinkers, as he calls them, with which Collins has graced his discourse; in which he includes not only the ancient philosophers, but the inspired prophets, and even "King Solomon the wise."

not, and forbid others to do it, I am a freethinker, but not an atheist.

Plato was a freethinker; and his notions are so like some in the gospel, that a heathen charged Christ with borrowing his doctrine from Plato. But Origen defends Christ very well against this charge, by saying he did not understand Greek, and therefore could not borrow his doctrine from Plato. However, their two religions agreed so well, that it was common for Christians to turn Platonists, and Platonists Christians. When the Christians found out this, one of their zealous priests (worse than any atheist) forged several things under Plato's name, but conformable to Christianity, by which the heathens were fraudulently converted.

Epicurus was the greatest of all freethinkers, and consequently the most virtuous man in the world. His opinions in religion were the most complete system of atheism that ever appeared. Christians ought to have the greatest veneration for him, because he taught a higher point of virtue than Christ; I mean, the virtue of friendship, which, in the sense we usually understand it, is not so much as named in the New Testament.

Plutarch was a freethinker, notwithstanding his being a priest; but indeed he was a heathen priest. His freethinking appears by shewing the innocence of atheism, (which at worst is only false reasoning,) and the mischiefs of superstition; and he explains what superstition is, by calling it a conceit of immortal ills after death, the opinion of hell torments, dreadful aspects, doleful groans, and the like. He is likewise very satirical upon the public forms of devotion in his own country, a qualification absolutely necessary to a freethinker; yet those forms which he ridicules, are the very same that now pass for true worship in almost all countries. I am sure some

of them do so in ours; such as abject looks, distortions, wry faces, beggarly tones, humiliation, and contrition.

Varro, the most learned among the Romans, was a freethinker; for he said the heathen divinity contained many fables below the dignity of immortal beings; such, for instance, as gods begotten and proceeding from other gods. These two words I desire you will particularly remark, because they are the very terms made use of by our priests in their doctrine of the Trinity. He says likewise, that there are many things false in religion, and so say all freethinkers; but then he adds, "which the vulgar ought not to know, but it is expedient they should believe." In this last he, indeed, discovers the whole secret of a statesman and politician, by denying the vulgar the privilege of freethinking; and here I differ from him. However, it is manifest from hence, that the Trinity was an invention of statesmen and politicians.

The grave and wise Cato, the censor, will for ever live in that noble freethinking saying—"I wonder," said he, "how one of our priests can forbear laughing when he sees another!" For contempt of priests is another grand characteristic of a freethinker. This shews that Cato understood the whole mystery of the Roman "religion as by law established." I beg you, sir, not to overlook these last words, "religion as by law established." I translate *haruspex* into the general word, *priest*. Thus I apply the sentence to our priests in England; and when Dr. Smallridge sees Dr. Atterbury, I wonder how either of them can forbear laughing at the cheat they put upon the people, by making them believe their "religion as by law established."

Cicero, that consummate philosopher and noble patriot, though he was a priest, and consequently

more likely to be a knave, gave the greatest proofs of his freethinking. First, he professed the sceptic philosophy, which doubts of everything. Then he wrote two treatises; in the first, he shews the weakness of the stoics' arguments for the being of the gods: In the latter, he has destroyed the whole revealed religion of the Greeks and Romans; for why should not theirs be a revealed religion as well as that of Christ? Cicero likewise tells us, as his own opinion, that they who study philosophy, do not believe there are any gods: he denies the immortality of the soul, and says there can be nothing after death.

And because the priests have the impudence to quote Cicero, in their pulpits and pamphlets against freethinking, I am resolved to disarm them of his authority. You must know, his philosophical works are generally in dialogues, where people are brought in disputing against one another. Now the priests, when they see an argument to prove a God, offered perhaps by a stoic, are such knaves or blockheads, to quote it as if it were Cicero's own; whereas Cicero was so noble a freethinker, that he believed nothing at all of the matter, nor ever shews the least inclination to favour superstition, or the belief of a God, and the immortality of the soul; unless what he throws out sometimes to save himself from danger, in his speeches to the Roman mob, whose religion was, however, much more innocent, and less absurd, than that of popery at least: and I could say more —but you understand me.

Seneca was a great freethinker, and had a noble notion of the worship of the gods, for which our priests would call any man an atheist; he laughs at morning devotions, or worshipping upon Sabbath-days; he says, God has no need of ministers and servants, because he himself serves mankind. This

religious man, like his religious brethren the stoics, denies the immortality of the soul; and says, all that is feigned to be so terrible in hell, is but a fable: death puts an end to all our misery, &c. Yet the priests were anciently so fond of Seneca, that they forged a correspondence of letters between him and St. Paul.

Solomon himself, whose writings are called "the word of God," was such a freethinker, that if he were now alive, nothing but his building of churches could have kept our priests from calling him an atheist. He affirms the eternity of the world almost in the same manner with Manilius, the heathen philosophical poet, which opinion entirely overthrows the history of the creation by Moses, and all the New Testament: he denies the immortality of the soul, assures us, "that men die like beasts," and "that both go to one place."

The prophets of the Old Testament were generally freethinkers. You must understand, that their way of learning to prophesy was by music and drinking.* These prophets wrote against the established religion of the Jews, (which those people looked upon as the institution of God himself,) as if they believed it was all a cheat: that is to say, with as great liberty against the priests and prophets of Israel, as Dr. Tindal did lately against the priests and prophets of our Israel, who has clearly shewn them and their religion to be cheats. To prove this, you may read several passages in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Jeremiah,

* Collins, after making the charge, which has been repeated by all infidels down to Thomas Paine, that the prophets acquired their fervour of spirit by the aid of music and wine, allows, nevertheless, that they were great freethinkers, and "writ with as great liberty against the established religion of the Jews, which the people looked on as the institution of God himself, as if they looked upon it all to be imposture."—*Discourse*, p. 153, *et sequen.*

&c., wherein you will find such instances of free-thinking, that, if any Englishman had talked so in our days, their opinions would have been registered in Dr. Sacheverell's trial, and in the representation of the lower house of convocation, and produced as so many proofs of the profaneness, blasphemy, and atheism of the nation; there being nothing more profane, blasphemous, or atheistical, in those representations, than what these prophets have spoken, whose writings are yet called by our priests, "the word of God." And therefore these prophets are as much atheists as myself, or as any of my freethinking brethren whom I lately named to you.

Josephus was a great freethinker. I wish he had chosen a better subject to write on than those ignorant, barbarous, ridiculous scoundrels, the Jews, whom God (if we may believe the priests) thought fit to choose for his own people. I will give you some instances of his freethinking.—He says, Cain travelled through several countries, and kept company with rakes and profligate fellows; he corrupted the simplicities of former times, &c., which plainly supposes men before Adam, and consequently that the priests' history of the creation by Moses is an imposture. He says, the Israelites' passing through the Red Sea, was no more than Alexander's passing at the Pamphilian sea; that, as for the appearance of God at Mount Sinai, the reader may believe it as he pleases; that Moses persuaded the Jews he had God for his guide, just as the Greeks pretended they had their laws from Apollo. These are noble strains of freethinking, which the priests knew not how to solve but by thinking as freely: for one of them says that Josephus wrote this to make his work acceptable to the heathens, by striking out everything that was incredible.

Origen, who was the first Christian that had any

learning, has left a noble testimony of his freethinking; for a general council has determined him to be damned, which plainly shews he was a freethinker, and was no saint; for people were only sainted because of their want of learning and excess of zeal; so that all the fathers, who are called saints by the priests, were worse than atheists.

Minutius Felix seems to be a true modern latitudinarian, freethinking Christian; for he is against altars, churches, public preaching, and public assemblies; and likewise against priests; for, he says, there were several great flourishing empires before there were any orders of priests in the world.

Synesius, who had too much learning and too little zeal for a saint, was for some time a great freethinker; he could not believe the resurrection till he was made a bishop, and then pretended to be convinced by a lying miracle.

To come to our own country: My Lord Bacon was a great freethinker, when he tells us, "that whatever has the least relation to religion, is particularly liable to suspicion;" by which he seems to suspect all the facts whereon most of the superstitions (that is to say, what the priests call the religions) of the world are grounded. He also prefers atheism before superstition.

Mr. Hobbes was a person of great learning, virtue, and freethinking, except in the high church politics.

But Archbishop Tillotson is the person whom all English freethinkers own as their head; and his virtue is indisputable for this manifest reason, that Dr. Hickes, a priest, calls him an atheist; says he caused several to turn atheists, and to ridicule the priesthood and religion. These must be allowed to be noble effects of freethinking. This great prelate assures us, that all the duties of the Christian religion, with respect to God, are no other but what

natural light prompts men to, except the two sacraments, and praying to God in the name and mediation of Christ. As a priest and prelate, he was obliged to say something of Christianity; but pray observe, sir, how he brings himself off. He justly affirms, that even these things are of less moment than natural duties; and, because mothers' nursing their children is a natural duty, it is of more moment than the two sacraments, or than praying to God in the name, and by the mediation, of Christ. This freethinking archbishop could not allow a miracle sufficient to give credit to a prophet, who taught anything contrary to our natural notions; by which, it is plain, he rejected at once all the mysteries of Christianity.

I could name one-and-twenty more great men, who were all freethinkers, but that I fear to be tedious; for it is certain that all men of sense depart from the opinions commonly received; and are consequently more or less men of sense, according as they depart more or less from the opinions commonly received; neither can you name an enemy to freethinking, however he be dignified or distinguished, whether archbishop, bishop, priest, or deacon, who has not been either "a crack-brained enthusiast, a diabolical villain, or a most profound ignorant brute."

Thus, sir, I have endeavoured to execute your commands, and you may print this Letter, if you please; but I would have you conceal my name. For my opinion of virtue is, that we ought not to venture doing ourselves harm, by endeavouring to do good.

I am yours, &c.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE here given the public a brief but faithful abstract of this most excellent Essay; wherein I have all along religiously adhered to our author's notions, and generally to his words, without any other addition than that of explaining a few necessary consequences, for the sake of ignorant readers; for to those who have the least degree of learning, I own, they will be wholly useless. I hope I have not in any single instance misrepresented the thoughts of this admirable writer. If I have happened to mistake through inadvertency, I entreat he will condescend to inform me, and point out the place; upon which I will immediately beg pardon both of him and the world. The design of his pieee is to recommend freethinking; and one chief motive is the example of many excellent men who were of that sect. He produces, as the principal points of their freethinking, that they denied the being of a God, the torments of hell, the immortality of the soul, the Trinity, incarnation, the history of the creation by Moses, with many other such "fabulous and blasphemous stories." as he judiciously calls them: and he asserts, that whoever denies the most of these, is the completest freethinker, and consequently the wisest and most virtuous man.

The author, sensible of the prejudices of the age, does not directly affirm himself an atheist; he goes no farther than to pronounce that atheism is the most perfect degree of freethinking; and leaves the reader to form the conclusion. However, he seems to allow, that a man may be a tolerable freethinker, though he does believe a God, provided he utterly rejects "providence, revelation, the Old and New

Testament, future rewards and punishments, the immortality of the soul," and other the like impossible absurdities. Which mark of superabundant caution, sacrificing truth to the superstition of priests, may perhaps be forgiven, but ought not to be imitated by any who would arrive (even in this author's judgment) at the true perfection of free-thinking.

SOME THOUGHTS

ON

FREETHINKING.

WRITTEN IN ENGLAND, BUT LEFT UNFINISHED.

DISCOURSING one day with a prelate of the kingdom of Ireland, who is a person of excellent wit and learning, he offered a notion applicable to the subject we were then upon, which I took to be altogether new and right. He said, that the difference betwixt a madman and one in his wits, in what related to speech, consisted in this; that the former spoke out whatever came into his mind, and just in the confused manner as his imagination presented the ideas: the latter only expressed such thoughts as his judgment directed him to choose, leaving the rest to die away in his memory; and that, if the wisest man would, at any time, utter his thoughts in the crude indigested manner as they come into his head, he would be looked upon as raving mad. And, indeed, when we consider our thoughts, as they are the seeds of words and actions, we cannot but agree that they ought to be kept

under the strictest regulation; and that in the great multiplicity of ideas which one's mind is apt to form, there is nothing more difficult than to select those which are most proper for the conduct of life. So that I cannot imagine what is meant by the mighty zeal in some people for asserting the freedom of thinking; because, if such thinkers keep their thoughts within their own breasts, they can be of no consequence, farther than to themselves. If they publish them to the world, they ought to be answerable for the effects their thoughts produce upon others. There are thousands in this kingdom, who, in their thoughts, prefer a republic, or absolute power of a prince, before a limited monarchy; yet, if any of these should publish their opinions, and go about, by writing or discourse, to persuade the people to innovations in government, they would be liable to the severest punishments the law can inflict; and therefore they are usually so wise as to keep their sentiments to themselves. But, with respect to religion, the matter is quite otherwise: and the public, at least here in England, seems to be of opinion with *Tiberius*, that *Deorum injuriæ diis curæ*. They leave it to God Almighty to vindicate the injuries done to himself, who is no doubt sufficiently able, by perpetual miracles, to revenge the affronts of impious men. And, it should seem, that is what princes expect from him, though I cannot readily conceive the grounds they go upon; nor why, since they are God's vicegerents, they do not think themselves at least equally obliged to preserve their master's honour as their own; since this is what they expect from those they depute, and since they never fail to represent the disobedience of their subjects as offences against God. It is true, the visible reason of this neglect is obvious enough: the consequences of atheistical opinions, published to the world, are

not so immediate, or so sensible, as doctrines of rebellion and sedition, spread in a proper season. However, I cannot but think the same consequences are as natural and probable from the former, though more remote: and whether these have not been in view among our great planters of infidelity in England, I shall hereafter examine.

A LETTER

TO

A YOUNG CLERGYMAN

LATELY ENTERED INTO

HOLY ORDERS.

1719–20.

THIS excellent treatise, well worthy of the study of all who take orders, seems to claim precedence, in point of general importance, over those pieces which relate more immediately to church politics. The cynic philosophy of Swift, his detestation of the times in which he lived, and his ideas of the unduly degraded state of the clergy, are strangely contrasted with his sound good sense, extensive knowledge of the world, principles of practical morality, and high feeling, not only of the importance of his order, but of the talents and virtues requisite to its dignity. The Dean's very peculiar vein of humour, which seldom forsook him, even upon the most serious subjects, glances forth from time to time through his graver precepts. The Essays upon the Fates of Clergymen, and the Hatred to the Clergy, seem a proper sequel to the Letter.

Dublin, Jan. 9, 1719–20.

SIR,

ALTHOUGH it was against my knowledge or advice, that you entered into holy orders, under the present dispositions of mankind towards the church, yet since it is now supposed too late to recede, (at least according to the general practice and opinion,) I cannot forbear offering my thoughts to you upon this new condition of life you are engaged in.

I could heartily wish, that the circumstances of your fortune had enabled you to have continued some years longer in the university, at least till you were ten years' standing; to have laid in a competent stock of human learning, and some knowledge in divinity, before you attempted to appear in the world: for I cannot but lament the common course which at least nine in ten of those who enter into the ministry are obliged to run. When they have taken a degree, and are consequently grown a burden to their friends, who now think themselves fully discharged, they get into orders as soon as they can, (upon which I shall make no remarks,) first solicit a readership, and if they be very fortunate, arrive in time to a curacy here in town, or else are sent to be assistants in the country, where they probably continue several years, (many of them their whole lives,) with thirty or forty pounds a-year for their support: till some bishop, who happens to be not overstocked with relations, or attached to favourites, or is content to supply his diocese without colonies from England, bestows upon them some inconsiderable benefice, when it is odds they are already encumbered with a numerous family. I should be glad to know, what intervals of life such persons can possibly set apart for the improvement

of their minds ; or which way they could be furnished with books, the library they brought with them from their college being usually not the most numerous or judiciously chosen. If such gentlemen arrive to be great scholars, it must, I think, be either by means supernatural, or by a method altogether out of any road yet known to the learned. But I conceive the fact directly otherwise, and that many of them lose the greatest part of the small pittance they receive at the university.

I take it for granted, that you intend to pursue the beaten tract, and are already desirous to be seen in a pulpit : only I hope you will think it proper to pass your quarantine among some of the desolate churches five miles round this town, where you may at least learn to read and to speak, before you venture to expose your parts in a city congregation : not that these are better judges, but because, if a man must needs expose his folly, it is more safe and discreet to do so before few witnesses, and in a scattered neighbourhood. And you will do well if you can prevail upon some intimate and judicious friend to be your constant hearer, and allow him with the utmost freedom to give you notice of whatever he shall find amiss, either in your voice or gesture; for want of which early warning, many clergymen continue defective, and sometimes ridiculous, to the end of their lives. Neither is it rare to observe among excellent and learned divines, a certain ungracious manner, or an unhappy tone of voice, which they never have been able to shake off.

I should likewise have been glad, if you had applied yourself a little more to the study of the English language, than I fear you have done ; the neglect whereof is one of the most general defects among the scholars of this kingdom, who seem not to have the least conception of a style, but run on in

a flat kind of phraseology, often mingled with barbarous terms and expressions, peculiar to the nation; neither do I perceive that any person either finds or acknowledges his wants upon this head, or in the least desires to have them supplied. Proper words, in proper places, make the true definition of a style. But this would require too ample a disquisition to be now dwelt on: however, I shall venture to name one or two faults, which are easy to be remedied, with a very small portion of abilities.

The first is the frequent use of obscure terms, which by the women are called hard words, and, by the better sort of vulgar, fine language; than which I do not know a more universal, inexcusable, and unnecessary mistake, among the clergy of all distinctions, but especially the younger practitioners. I have been curious enough to take a list of several hundred words in a sermon of a new beginner, which not one of his hearers among a hundred could possibly understand; neither can I easily call to mind any clergyman of my own acquaintance who is wholly exempt from this error, although many of them agree with me in the dislike of the thing. But I am apt to put myself in the place of the vulgar, and think many words difficult or obscure, which the preacher will not allow to be so, because those words are obvious to scholars. I believe the method observed by the famous Lord Falkland,* in

* Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, slain at the battle of Newbury, in the great Civil War, and now better known by the splendid character drawn by Lord Clarendon than by his own compositions. "A person of such prodigious parts of learning and knowledge, of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so flowing and obliging an humanity and goodness to mankind, that, if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed Civil War than that single loss, it must be infamous and execrable to all posterity."—*History of the Rebellion*, Book VII.

some of his writings, would not be an ill one for young divines: I was assured by an old person of quality, who knew him well, that when he doubted whether a word was perfectly intelligible or not, he used to consult one of his lady's chambermaids, (not the waiting woman, because it was possible she might be conversant in romances,) and by her judgment was guided whether to receive or reject it. And if that great person thought such a caution necessary in treatises offered to the learned world, it will be sure at least as proper in sermons, where the meanest hearer is supposed to be concerned, and where very often a lady's chambermaid may be allowed to equal half the congregation, both as to quality and understanding. But I know not how it comes to pass, that professors in most arts and sciences are generally the worst qualified to explain their meanings to those who are not of their tribe: a common farmer shall make you understand in three words, that his foot is out of joint, or his collar-bone broken; wherein a surgeon, after a hundred terms of art, if you are not a scholar. shall leave you to seek. It is frequently the same case in law, physic, and even many of the meaner arts.

And upon this account it is, that among hard words I number likewise those which are peculiar to divinity as it is a science, because I have observed several clergymen, otherwise little fond of obscure terms, yet in their sermons very liberal of those which they find in ecclesiastical writers, as if it were our duty to understand them: which I am sure it is not. And I defy the greatest divine to produce any law, either of God or man, which obliges me to comprehend the meaning of *omniscience*, *omnipresence*, *ubiquity*, *attribute*, *beatific vision*, with a thousand others so frequent in pulpits, any more than

that of *eccentric*, *idiosyncracy*, *entity*, and the like.* I believe I may venture to insist farther, that many terms used in holy writ, particularly by St. Paul, might with more discretion be changed into plainer speech, except when they are introduced as part of a quotation.†

I am the more earnest in this matter, because it is a general complaint, and the justest in the world. For a divine has nothing to say to the wisest congregation of any parish in this kingdom, which he may not express in a manner to be understood by the meanest among them. And this assertion must be true, or else God requires from us more than we are able to perform. However, not to contend whether a logician might possibly put a case that would serve for an exception, I will appeal to any man of letters, whether at least nineteen in twenty of those perplexing words might not be changed into easy ones, such as naturally first occur to ordinary men, and probably did so at first to those very gentlemen who are so fond of the former.

We are often reproved by divines, from the pulpits, on account of our ignorance in things sacred, and perhaps with justice enough: however, it is not very reasonable for them to expect that common men should understand expressions which are never made use of in common life. No gentleman thinks it safe or prudent to send a servant with a message without repeating it more than once, and endeavouring to put it into terms brought down to the

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* The greater part of these examples of obscure terms are now naturalised, and generally understood. The late Dr. Johnson's writings had a great effect in familiarising the public to words derived from the dead languages.

† In his Thoughts on Religion, Swift regrets that points of doctrine have been founded upon the terms of eastern elocution employed by St. Paul.

capacity of the bearer: yet, after all this care, it is frequent for servants to mistake, and sometimes occasion misunderstandings among friends, although the common domestics in some gentlemen's families have more opportunities of improving their minds than the ordinary sort of tradesmen.

It is usual for clergymen, who are taxed with this learned defect, to quote Dr. Tillotson, and other famous divines, in their defence, without considering the difference between elaborate discourses upon important occasions, delivered to princes or parliaments, written with a view of being made public, and a plain sermon intended for the middle or lower size of people. Neither do they seem to remember the many alterations, additions, and expungings, made by great authors in those treatises which they prepare for the public. Besides, that excellent prelate above-mentioned, was known to preach after a much more popular manner in the city congregations; and if in those parts of his works he be anywhere too obscure for the understandings of many, who may be supposed to have been his hearers, it ought to be numbered among his omissions.

The fear of being thought pedants has been of pernicious consequence to young divines. This has wholly taken many of them off from their severer studies in the university; which they have exchanged for plays, poems, and pamphlets, in order to qualify them for tea-tables and coffee-houses. This they usually call "polite conversation, knowing the world, and reading men instead of books." These accomplishments, when applied to the pulpit, appear by a quaint, terse, florid style, rounded into periods and cadences, commonly without either propriety or meaning. I have listened with my utmost attention for half an hour to an orator of this species, without being able to understand, much less to carry away,

one single sentence out of a whole sermon. Others, to show that their studies have not been confined to sciences or ancient authors, will talk in the style of a gaming ordinary, and White Friars,* when I suppose the hearers can be little edified by the terms of "*palming*, *shuffling*, *biting*, *bamboozling*," and the like, if they have not been sometimes conversant among pick-pockets and sharpers. And truly, as they say a man is known by his company, so it should seem that a man's company may be known by his manner of expressing himself, either in public assemblies, or private conversation.

It would be endless to run over the several defects of style among us; I shall therefore say nothing of the mean and paltry, (which are usually attended by the fustian,) much less of the slovenly or indecent. Two things I will just warn you against: the first is, the frequency of flat unnecessary epithets; and the other is, the folly of using old threadbare phrases, which will often make you go out of your way to find and apply them, are nauseous to rational hearers, and will seldom express your meaning, as well as your own natural words.

Although, as I have already observed, our English tongue is too little cultivated in this kingdom, yet the faults are nine in ten owing to affectation, and not to the want of understanding. When a man's thoughts are clear, the properest words will generally offer themselves first, and his own judgment will direct him in what order to place them, so as they may be best understood. When men err against this method, it is usually on purpose, and to shew their knowledge of the world. In short, that simplicity, without which no human performance

* A place of asylum, as already noticed, frequented by sharpers.

can arrive to any great perfection, is nowhere more eminently useful than in this.

I have been considering that part of oratory which relates to the moving of the passions; this I observe is in esteem and practice among some church divines, as well as among all the preachers and hearers of the fanatic or enthusiastic strain. I will here deliver to you (perhaps with more freedom than prudence) my opinion upon the point.

The two great orators of Greece and Rome, Demosthenes and Cicero, though each of them a leader (or, as the Greeks called it, a demagogue) in a popular state, yet seem to differ in their practice upon this branch of their art: the former, who had to deal with a people of much more politeness, learning, and wit, laid the greatest weight of his oratory upon the strength of his arguments, offered to their understanding and reason: whereas Tully considered the dispositions of a sincere, more ignorant, and lest mercurial nation, by dwelling almost entirely on the pathetic part.

But the principal thing to be remembered is, that the constant design of both these orators, in all their speeches, was, to drive some one particular point; either the condemnation or acquittal of an accused person, a persuasive to war, the enforcing of a law, and the like: which was determined upon the spot, according as the orators on either side prevailed. And here it was often found of absolute necessity to inflame or cool the passions of the audience; especially at Rome, where Tully spoke, and with whose writings young divines (I mean those among them who read old authors) are more conversant than with those of Demosthenes; who by many degrees excelled the other, at least as an orator. But I do not see how this talent of moving the passions can be of any great use toward directing

Christian men in the conduct of their lives; at least, in these northern climates, where I am confident the strongest eloquence of that kind will leave few impressions upon any of our spirits deep enough to last till the next morning, or rather, to the next meal.*

But what has chiefly put me out of conceit with this moving manner of preaching, is the frequent disappointment it meets with. I know a gentleman who made it a rule in reading, to skip over all sentences where he spied a note of admiration at the end. I believe those preachers who abound in *epiphonemas*,† if they look about them, would find one part of their congregation out of countenance, and the other asleep; except perhaps an old female beggar or two in the aisles, who (if they be sincere) may probably groan at the sound.

Nor is it a wonder that this expedient should so often miscarry, which requires so much art and genius to arrive at any perfection in it; as every man will find, much sooner than learn, by consulting Cicero himself.

I therefore entreat you to make use of the faculty (if you ever be so unfortunate as to think you have it) as seldom, and with as much caution as you can, else I may probably have occasion to say of you, as a great person said of another upon this very subject. A lady asked him, coming out of church, whether it were not a very moving discourse? "Yes," says he, "I was extremely sorry, for the man is my friend."

If in company you offer something for a jest, and

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* We have already observed, that the Dean, in his own practice, rarely or never attempted to get the feelings of his audience on the side of the preacher.

† *Epiphonema* is a figure in rhetoric, signifying a sententious kind of exclamation.

nobody seconds you in your own laughter, or seems to relish what you said, you may condemn their taste, if you please, and appeal to better judgments; but, in the meantime, it must be agreed, you make a very indifferent figure: and it is at least equally ridiculous to be disappointed in endeavouring to make other folks grieve, as to make them laugh.

A plain convincing reason may possibly operate upon the mind, both of a learned and ignorant hearer, as long as they live, and will edify a thousand times more than the art of wetting the handkerchiefs of a whole congregation, if you were sure to attain it.

If your arguments be strong, in God's name offer them in as moving a manner as the nature of the subject will properly admit, wherein reason and good advice will be your safest guides; but beware of letting the pathetic part swallow up the rational: for I suppose philosophers have long agreed, that passion should never prevail over reason.

As I take it, the two principal branches of preaching are, first, to tell the people what is their duty, and then to convince them that it is so. The topics for both these, we know, are brought from scripture and reason. Upon the former, I wish it were often practised to instruct the hearers in the limits, extent, and compass of every duty; which requires a good deal of skill and judgment: the other branch is, I think, not so difficult. But what I would offer upon both, is this, that it seems to be in the power of a reasonable clergyman, if he will be at the pains, to make the most ignorant man comprehend what is his duty, and to convince him by arguments drawn to the level of his understanding, that he ought to perform it.

But I must remember that my design in this paper, was not so much to instruct you in your busi-

ness, either as a clergyman or a preacher, as to warn you against some mistakes, which are obvious to the generality of mankind, as well as to me: and we, who are hearers, may be allowed to have some opportunities in the quality of being standers-by. Only, perhaps, I may now again transgress, by desiring you to express the heads of your divisions in as few and clear words as you possibly can; otherwise I, and many thousand others, will never be able to retain them, and consequently to carry away a syllable of the sermon.

I shall now mention a particular, wherein your whole body will be certainly against me, and the laity, almost to a man, on my side. However it came about, I cannot get over the prejudice of taking some little offence at the clergy, for perpetually reading their sermons; perhaps my frequent hearing of foreigners, who never made use of notes, may have added to my disgust. And I cannot but think, that whatever is read differs as much from what is repeated without book, as a copy does from an original. At the same time, I am highly sensible, what an extreme difficulty it would be upon you to alter this method; and that in such a case, your sermons would be much less valuable than they are, for want of time to improve and correct them. I would therefore gladly come to a compromise with you in this matter. I knew a clergyman of some distinction, who appeared to deliver his sermon without looking into his notes, which when I complimented him upon, he assured me he could not repeat six lines; but his method was to write the whole sermon in a large plain hand, with all the forms of margin, paragraph, marked page, and the like; then on Sunday morning he took care to run it over five or six times, which he could do in an hour; and when he delivered it, by pretending to

turn his face from one side to the other, he would (in his own expression) pick up the lines, and cheat his people, by making them believe he had it all by heart. He farther added, that whenever he happened by neglect to omit any of these circumstances, the vogue of the parish was, "Our doctor gave us but an indifferent sermon to-day." Now, among us, many clergymen act so directly contrary to this method, that from a habit of saving time and paper, which they acquired at the University, they write in so diminutive a manner, with such frequent blots and interlineations, that they are hardly able to go on without perpetual hesitations, or extemporary expletives: and I desire to know what can be more inexcusable, than to see a divine and a scholar at a loss in reading his own compositions, which it is supposed he has been preparing with much pains and thought for the instruction of his people? The want of a little more care in this article, is the cause of much ungraceful behaviour. You will observe some clergymen with their heads held down from the beginning to the end, within an inch of the cushion, to read what is hardly legible: which, besides the untoward manner, hinders them from making the best advantage of their voice: others again have a trick of popping up and down every moment from their paper to the audience, like an idle school-boy on a repetition day.*

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* The custom of reading sermons, now universal in the church of England, seems originally to have arisen in opposition to the practice of Dissenters, many of whom affected to trust to inspiration in their *extempore* harangues. But there is certainly a wide difference between the two extremes, of writing down every word that is to be spoken, and of making no previous preparation, division, or arrangement of discourse. He who ties himself down to his written sheets of paper, necessarily loses every advantage with which the flowing current of his own ideas always supplies

Let me entreat you, therefore, to add one half-crown a year to the article of paper; to transcribe your sermons in as large and plain a manner as you can; and either make no interlineations, or change the whole leaf; for we, your hearers, would rather you should be less correct, than perpetually stammering, which I take to be one of the worst solecisms in rhetoric. And, lastly, read your sermon once or twice a-day, for a few days before you preach it: to which you will probably answer some years hence, "that it was but just finished when the last bell rang to church:" and I shall readily believe, but not excuse you.

I cannot forbear warning you, in the most earnest manner, against endeavouring at wit in your sermons, because, by the strictest computation, it is very near a million to one that you have none; and because too many of your calling have consequently made themselves everlastingly ridiculous by attempting it. I remember several young men in this town, who could never leave the pulpit under half a dozen conceits; and this faculty adhered to those gentlemen a longer or shorter time, exactly in proportion to their several degrees of dulness: accordingly, I am told that some of them retain it to this day. I heartily wish the brood were at an end.

Before you enter into the common insufferable cant of taking all occasions to disparage the heathen philosophers, I hope you will differ from some of your brethren, by first inquiring what those philosophers can say for themselves.* The system of

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the *extempore* speaker. And it seems conclusive against this frigid custom, that, in any other mode of public speaking, it would be held absurd and childish.

* It was the fate of the present Editor to hear a preacher, after labouring to convince his congregation of the absolute certainty of death, demand, in further illustration, where were now the

morality to be gathered out of the writings or sayings of those ancient sages, falls undoubtedly very short of that delivered in the gospel, and wants, besides, the divine sanction which our Saviour gave his. Whatever is farther related by the evangelists, contains chiefly matters of fact, and consequently of faith; such as the birth of Christ, his being the Messiah, his miracles, his death, resurrection, and ascension: none of which can properly come under the appellation of human wisdom, being intended only to make us wise unto salvation. And therefore in this point nothing can be justly laid to the charge of the philosophers, farther than that they were ignorant of certain facts that happened long after their death. But I am deceived, if a better comment could be anywhere collected upon the moral part of the gospel, than from the writings of those excellent men; even that divine precept of loving our enemies, is at large insisted on by Plato, who puts it, as I remember, into the mouth of Socrates. And as to the reproach of heathenism, I doubt they had less of it than the corrupted Jews, in whose time they lived. For it is a gross piece of ignorance among us, to conceive, that in those polite and learned ages, even persons of any tolerable education, much less the wisest philosophers, did acknowledge or worship any more than one almighty power, under several denominations, to whom they allowed all those attributes we ascribe to the divinity; and, as I take it, human comprehension reaches no farther; neither did our Saviour think it necessary to explain to us the nature of

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ancient philosophers of Greece and Rome, of whom he numbered a reasonable bead-roll, beginning with Socrates? and having triumphantly replied to his own question, that they were all dead, he was pleased to subjoin, "and I fear, my brethren, finally damn'd."

God, because, as I suppose, it would be impossible, without bestowing on us other faculties than we possess at present. But the true misery of the heathen world appears to be, what I before mentioned, the want of a divine sanction, without which the dictates of the philosophers failed in the point of authority: and consequently the bulk of mankind lay indeed under a great load of ignorance, even in the article of morality; but the philosophers themselves did not. Take the matter in this light, it will afford field enough for a divine to enlarge on, by showing the advantages which the Christian world has over the heathen, and the absolute necessity of divine revelation, to make the knowledge of the true God, and the practice of virtue, more universal in the world.

I am not ignorant how much I differ in this opinion from some ancient fathers in the church, who, arguing against the heathens, made it a principal topic to decry their philosophy as much as they could: which, I hope, is not altogether our present case. Besides, it is to be considered, that those fathers lived in the decline of literature; and in my judgment (who should be unwilling to give the least offence) appear to be rather most excellent holy persons, than of transcendent genius and learning. Their genuine writings (for many of them have extremely suffered by spurious editions) are of admirable use for confirming the truth of ancient doctrines and discipline, by shewing the state and practice of the primitive church. But among such of them as have fallen in my way, I do not remember any, whose manner of arguing or exhorting I could heartily recommend to the imitation of a young divine, when he is to speak from the pulpit. Perhaps I judge too hastily, there being several of them in whose writings I have made very little pro-

gress, and in others none at all. For I perused only such as were recommended to me, at a time when I had more leisure, and a better disposition to read, than have since fallen to my share.

To return then to the heathen philosophers: I hope you will not only give them quarter, but make their works a considerable part of your study. To these I will venture to add the principal orators and historians, and perhaps a few of the poets; by the reading of which, you will soon discover your mind and thoughts to be enlarged, your imagination extended and refined, your judgment directed, your admiration lessened, and your fortitude increased; all which advantages must needs be of excellent use to a divine, whose duty it is to preach and practise the contempt of human things.

I would say something concerning quotations, wherein I think you cannot be too sparing, except from scripture, and the primitive writers of the church. As to the former, when you offer a text as a proof of an illustration, we your hearers expect to be fairly used, and sometimes think we have reason to complain, especially of you younger divines; which makes us fear that some of you conceive you have no more to do than to turn over a concordance, and there having found the principal word, introduce as much of the verse as will serve your turn, though in reality it makes nothing for you. I do not altogether disapprove the manner of interweaving texts of scripture through the style of your sermons, wherein, however, I have sometimes observed great instances of indiscretion and impropriety, against which I therefore venture to give you a caution.

As to quotations from ancient fathers, I think they are best brought in to confirm some opinion controverted by those who differ from us: in other

cases we give you full power to adopt the sentence for your own, rather than tell us, "as St. Austin excellently observes." But to mention modern writers by name, or use the phrase of "a late excellent prelate of our church," and the like, is altogether intolerable, and, for what reason I know not, makes every rational hearer ashamed. Of no better a stamp is your "heathen philosopher," and "famous poet," and "Roman historian," at least in common congregations, who will rather believe you on your own word, than on that of Plato or Homer.

I have lived to see Greek and Latin almost entirely driven out of the pulpit, for which I am heartily glad. The frequent use of the latter was certainly a remnant of popery, which never admitted scripture in the vulgar language; and I wonder that practice was never accordingly objected to us by the fanatics.

The mention of quotations puts me in mind of commonplace books, which have been long in use by industrious young divines, and, I hear, do still continue so; I know they are very beneficial to lawyers and physicians, because they are collections of facts or cases, whereupon a great part of their several faculties depend: of these I have seen several, but never yet any written by a clergyman; only from what I am informed, they generally are extracts of theological and moral sentences, drawn from ecclesiastical and other authors, reduced under proper heads, usually begun, and perhaps finished, while the collectors were young in the church, as being intended for materials, or nurseries to stock future sermons. You will observe the wise editors of ancient authors, when they meet a sentence worthy of being distinguished, take special care to have the first word printed in capital letters, that you may not overlook it; such, for example, as the

INCONSTANCY of FORTUNE, the GOODNESS of PEACE, the EXCELLENCY of WISDOM, the CERTAINTY of DEATH: that PROSPERITY makes men INSOLENT, and ADVERSITY HUMBLE; and the like eternal truths, which every ploughman knows well enough, though he never heard of Aristotle or Plato. If theological commonplace books be no better filled, I think they had better be laid aside; and I could wish, that men of tolerable intellectuals would rather trust their own natural reason, improved by a general conversation with books, to enlarge on a point which they are supposed already to understand. If a rational man reads an excellent author with just application, he shall find himself extremely improved, and, perhaps, insensibly led to imitate that author's perfections, although in a little time he should not remember one word in the book, nor even the subject it handled; for books give the same turn to our thoughts and way of reasoning, that good and ill company do to our behaviour and conversation; without either loading our memories, or making us even sensible of the change.* And particularly I have observed in preaching, that no men succeed better than those who trust entirely to the stock or fund of their own reason, advanced indeed, but not overlaid, by commerce with books. Whoever only reads in order to transcribe wise and shining remarks, without entering into the genius and spirit of the author, as it is probable he will make no very judicious extract, so he will be apt to trust to that collection in all his compositions, and be misled out of the regular way of thinking, in order to introduce those materials which he has

* This invaluable observation ought to be treasured by those who plead the shortness of their memory as a cause of discontinuing their studies.

been at the pains to gather: and the product of all this will be found a manifest incoherent piece of patchwork.

Some gentlemen, abounding in their university erudition, are apt to fill their sermons with philosophical terms, and notions of the metaphysical or abstracted kind; which generally have one advantage, to be equally understood by the wise, the vulgar, and the preacher himself. I have been better entertained, and more informed, by a few pages in the Pilgrim's Progress, than by a long discourse upon the will and the intellect, and simple or complex ideas. Others again are fond of dilating on matter and motion, talk of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, of theories, and phenomena; directly against the advice of St. Paul, who yet appears to have been conversant enough in those kinds of studies.

I do not find that you are anywhere directed in the canons or articles, to attempt explaining the mysteries of the Christian religion. And indeed, since Providence intended there should be mysteries, I do not see how it can be agreeable to piety, orthodoxy, or good sense, to go about such a work. For to me there seems to be a manifest dilemma in the case; if you explain them, they are mysteries no longer; if you fail, you have laboured to no purpose. What I should think most reasonable and safe for you to do upon this occasion, is, upon solemn days, to deliver the doctrine as the church holds it; and confirm it by scripture.* For my part, having considered the matter impartially, I can see no great reason, which those gentlemen you call the freethinkers can have, for their clamour

* See, in illustration of Swift's opinion, his own excellent Sermon on the Trinity.

against religious mysteries; since it is plain they were not invented by the clergy, to whom they bring no profit, nor acquire any honour. For every clergyman is ready, either to tell us the utmost he knows, or to confess that he does not understand them: neither is it strange, that there should be mysteries in divinity, as well as in the commonest operations of nature.

And here I am at a loss what to say upon the frequent custom of preaching against atheism, deism, freethinking, and the like, as young divines are particularly fond of doing, especially when they exercise their talent in churches frequented by persons of quality; which, as it is but an ill compliment to the audience, so I am under some doubt whether it answers the end.

Because persons under those imputations are generally no great frequenters of churches, and so the congregation is but little edified for the sake of three or four fools, who are past grace: neither do I think it any part of prudence to perplex the minds of well-disposed people with doubts, which probably would never have otherwise come into their heads. But I am of opinion, and dare be positive in it, that not one in a hundred of those who pretend to be freethinkers, are really so in their hearts. For there is one observation, which I never knew to fail, and I desire you will examine it in the course of your life, that no gentleman of a liberal education, and regular in his morals, did ever profess himself a freethinker: where then are these kind of people to be found? among the worst part of the soldiery; made up of pages, younger brothers of obscure families, and others of desperate fortunes; or else among idle town fops, and now and then a drunken 'squire of the country. Therefore nothing can be plainer, than that ignorance and vice are two in-

gredients absolutely necessary in the composition of those you generally call freethinkers, who, in propriety of speech, are no thinkers at all. And since I am in the way of it, pray consider one thing farther: as young as you are, you cannot but have already observed, what a violent run there is among too many weak people against university education; be firmly assured, that the whole cry is made up by those, who were either never sent to a college, or, through their irregularities and stupidity, never made the least improvement while they were there. I have above forty of the latter sort now in my eye; several of them in this town, whose learning, manners, temperance, probity, good-nature, and politics, are all of a piece; others of them in the country, oppressing their tenants, tyrannizing over the neighbourhood, cheating the vicar, talking nonsense, and getting drunk at the sessions. It is from such seminaries as these, that the world is provided with the several tribes and denominations of freethinkers; who, in my judgment, are not to be reformed by arguments offered to prove the truth of the Christian religion, because reasoning will never make a man correct an ill opinion, which by reasoning he never acquired: for, in the course of things, men always grow vicious before they become unbelievers: but if you would once convince the town or country profligate, by topics drawn from the view of their own quiet, reputation, health, and advantage, their infidelity would soon drop off: this, I confess, is no easy task, because it is, almost in a literal sense, to fight with beasts. Now, to make it clear, that we are to look for no other original of this infidelity, whereof divines so much complain, it is allowed on all hands, that the people of England are more corrupt in their morals than any other nation at this day under the sun: and this corruption is manifestly owing to other

causes, both numerous and obvious, much more than to the publication of irreligious books, which indeed are but the consequence of the former. For all the writers against Christianity, since the Revolution, have been of the lowest rank among men in regard to literature, wit, and good sense, and upon that account wholly unqualified to propagate heresies, unless among a people already abandoned.

In an age, where everything disliked by those who think with the majority, is called disaffection, it may perhaps be ill interpreted, when I venture to tell you, that this universal depravation of manners is owing to the perpetual bandying of factions among us for thirty years past, when, without weighing the motives of justice, law, conscience, or honour, every man adjusts his principles to those of the party he has chosen, and among whom he may best find his own account; but by reason of our frequent vicissitudes, men who were impatient of being out of play, have been forced to recant, or at least to reconcile their former tenets with every new system of administration. Add to this, that the old fundamental custom of annual parliaments being wholly laid aside, and elections growing chargeable, since gentlemen found that their country seats brought them in less than a seat in the House, the voters, that is to say, the bulk of the common people, have been universally seduced into bribery, perjury, drunkenness, malice, and slander.

Not to be farther tedious, or rather invidious, these are a few, among other causes, which have contributed to the ruin of our morals, and consequently to the contempt of religion: for imagine to yourself, if you please, a landed youth, whom his mother would never suffer to look into a book for fear of spoiling his eyes, got into parliament, and observing all enemies to the clergy heard with the

utmost applause, what notions he must imbibe, how readily he will join in the cry, what an esteem he will conceive of himself, and what a contempt he must entertain, not only for his vicar at home, but for the whole order.

I therefore again conclude, that the trade of infidelity has been taken up only for an expedient to keep in countenance that universal corruption of morals, which many other causes first contributed to introduce and to cultivate. And thus Mr. Hobbes's saying upon reason may be much more properly applied to religion—that, if religion will be against a man, a man will be against religion. Though, after all, I have heard a profligate offer much stronger arguments against paying his debts, than ever he was known to do against Christianity; indeed, the reason was, because in that juncture he happened to be closer pressed by the bailiff than the parson.

Ignorance may perhaps be the mother of superstition, but experience has not proved it to be so of devotion; for Christianity always made the most easy and quickest progress in civilized countries. I mention this, because it is affirmed, that the clergy are in most credit where ignorance prevails, (and surely this kingdom would be called the paradise of clergymen, if that opinion were true,) for which they instance England in the times of Popery. But whoever knows anything of three or four centuries before the Reformation, will find the little learning then stirring was more equally divided between the English clergy and laity than it is at present. There were several famous lawyers in that period, whose writings are still in the highest repute, and some historians and poets, who were not of the church. Whereas, now-a-days, our education is so corrupted, that you will hardly find a young person

of quality with the least tincture of knowledge, at the same time that many of the clergy were never more learned, or so scurvily treated. Here, among us at least, a man of letters, out of the three professions, is almost a prodigy. And those few, who have preserved any rudiments of learning, are, (except perhaps one or two smatterers,) the clergy's friends, to a man; and I dare appeal to any clergyman in this kingdom, whether the greatest dunce in the parish be not always the most proud, wicked, fraudulent, and intractable of his flock.

I think the clergy have almost given over perplexing themselves and their hearers with abstruse points of predestination, election, and the like; at least, it is time they should; and therefore I shall not trouble you farther upon this head.

I have now said all I could think convenient with relation to your conduct in the pulpit: your behaviour in the world is another scene, upon which I shall readily offer you my thoughts, if you appear to desire them from me by your approbation of what I have here written; if not, I have already troubled you too much.

I am, Sir,

Your affectionate friend and servant.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

FATES OF CLERGYMEN.

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THERE is no talent so useful toward rising in the world, or which puts men more out of the reach of fortune, than that quality generally possessed by the dullest sort of men, and in common speech called discretion; a species of lower prudence, by the assistance of which, people of the meanest intellectuals, without any other qualification, pass through the world in great tranquillity, and with universal good treatment, neither giving nor taking offence. Courts are seldom unprovided of persons under this character, on whom, if they happen to be of great quality, most employments, even the greatest, naturally fall, when competitors will not agree; and in such promotions, nobody rejoices or grieves. The truth of this I could prove by several instances within my own memory; for I say nothing of present times.

And, indeed, as regularity and forms are of great use in carrying on the business of the world, so it is very convenient, that persons endued with this kind

of discretion, should have that share which is proper to their talents, in the conduct of affairs, but by no means meddle in matters which require genius, learning, strong comprehension, quickness of conception, magnanimity, generosity, sagacity, or any other superior gift of human minds. Because this sort of discretion is usually attended with a strong desire of money, and few scruples about the way of obtaining it; with servile flattery and submission; with a want of all public spirit or principle; with a perpetual wrong judgment, when the owners come into power and high place, how to dispose of favour and preferment; having no measures for merit and virtue in others, but those very steps by which themselves ascended; nor the least intention of doing good or hurt to the public, farther than either one or t'other is likely to be subservient to their own security or interest. Thus, being void of all friendship and enmity, they never complain or find fault with the times, and indeed never have reason to do so.

Men of eminent parts and abilities, as well as virtues, do sometimes rise in the court, sometimes in the law, and sometimes even in the church. Such were the Lord Bacon, the Earl of Strafford, Archbishop Laud, in the reign of King Charles I., and others in our own times, whom I shall not name; but these, and many more, under different princes, and in different kingdoms, were disgraced or banished, or suffered death, merely in envy to their virtues and superior genius, which emboldened them in great exigencies and distresses of state, (wanting a reasonable infusion of this aldermanly discretion,) to attempt the service of their prince and country, out of the common forms.

This evil fortune, which generally attends extraordinary men in the management of great affairs, has

been imputed to divers causes that need not be here set down, when so obvious a one occurs, if what a certain writer observes be true, that when a great genius appears in the world, the dunces are all in confederacy against him. And if this be his fate when he employs his talents wholly in his closet, without interfering with any man's ambition or avarice, what must he expect, when he ventures out to seek for preferment in a court, but universal opposition when he is mounting the ladder, and every hand ready to turn him off when he is at the top? and in this point, fortune generally acts directly contrary to nature; for in nature we find, that bodies full of life and spirits mount easily, and are hard to fall, whereas heavy bodies are hard to rise, and come down with greater velocity, in proportion to their weight; but we find fortune every day acting just the reverse of this.

This talent of discretion, as I have described it in its several adjuncts and circumstances, is nowhere so serviceable as to the clergy, to whose preferment nothing is so fatal as the character of wit, politeness in reading or manners, or that kind of behaviour which we contract by having too much conversation with persons of high station and eminency; these qualifications being reckoned, by the vulgar of all ranks, to be marks of levity, which is the last crime the world will pardon in a clergyman; to this I may add a free manner of speaking in mixed company, and too frequent an appearance in places of much resort, which are equally noxious to spiritual promotion.

I have known, indeed, a few exceptions to some parts of these observations. I have seen some of the dullest men alive aiming at wit, and others, with as little pretensions, affecting politeness in manners and discourse: but never being able to persuade the

world of their guilt, they grew into considerable stations, upon the firm assurance which all people had of their discretion, because they were of a size too low to deceive the world to their own disadvantage. But this, I confess, is a trial too dangerous often to engage in.

There is a known story of a clergyman, who was recommended for a preferment by some great men at court, to an archbishop.* His grace said, "he had heard that the clergyman used to play at whist and swobbers; that as to playing now and then a sober game at whist for pastime, it might be pardoned, but he could not digest those wicked swobbers;" and it was with some pains that my Lord Somers could undeceive him. I ask, by what talents we may suppose that great prelate ascended so high, or what sort of qualifications he would expect in those whom he took into his patronage, or would probably recommend to court for the government of distant churches?

Two clergymen, in my memory, stood candidates for a small free school in Yorkshire, where a gentleman of quality and interest in the county, who happened to have a better understanding than his neighbours, procured the place for him who was the better scholar, and more gentlemanly person, of the two, very much to the regret of all the parish: the other, being disappointed, came up to London, where he became the greatest pattern of this lower discretion that I have known, and possessed it with as heavy intellectuals; which, together with the coldness of his temper, and gravity of his deport-

* Archbishop Tenison, who, by all contemporary accounts, was a very dull man. There was a bitter sarcasm upon him usually ascribed to Swift, "That he was as hot and heavy as a tailor's goose."

ment, carried him safe through many difficulties, and he lived and died in a great station; while his competitor is too obscure for fame to tell us what became of him.

This species of discretion, which I so much celebrate and do most heartily recommend, has one advantage not yet mentioned: It will carry a man safe through all the malice and variety of parties, so far, that whatever faction happens to be uppermost, his claim is usually allowed for a share of what is going. And the thing seems to me highly reasonable: for in all great changes, the prevailing side is usually so tempestuous, that it wants the ballast of those whom the world calls moderate men, and I call men of discretion; whom people in power may, with little ceremony, load as heavy as they please, drive them through the hardest and deepest roads without danger of foundering, or breaking their backs, and will be sure to find them neither resty nor vicious.

I will here give the reader a short history of two clergymen in England, the characters of each, and the progress of their fortunes in the world; by which the force of worldly discretion, and the bad consequences from the want of that virtue, will strongly appear.

Corusodes, an Oxford student, and a farmer's son, was never absent from prayers, or lecture, nor once out of his college, after Tom had tolled. He spent every day ten hours in his closet, in reading his courses, dozing, clipping papers, or darning his stockings; which last he performed to admiration. He could be soberly drunk, at the expense of others, with college ale, and at those seasons was always most devout. He wore the same gown five years without draggling or tearing. He never once looked into a play-book or a poem. He read Virgil and

Ramus in the same cadence, but with a very different taste. He never understood a jest, or had the least conception of wit.

For one saying he stands in renown to this day. Being with some other students over a pot of ale, one of the company said so many pleasant things that the rest were much diverted, only Corusodes was silent and unmoved. When they parted, he called this merry companion aside, and said, "Sir, I perceive by your often speaking, and your friends laughing, that you spoke many jests; and you could not but observe my silence: but, sir, this is my humour: I never make a jest myself, nor ever laugh at another man's."

Corusodes, thus endued, got into holy orders; having, by the most extreme parsimony, saved thirty-four pounds out of a very beggarly fellowship, he went up to London, where his sister was waiting-woman to a lady, and so good a solicitor, that by her means he was admitted to read prayers in the family twice a day, at ten shillings a month. He had now acquired a low, obsequious, awkward bow, and a talent of gross flattery both in and out of season; he would shake the butler by the hand; he taught the page his catechism, and was sometimes admitted to dine at the steward's table. In short, he got the good word of the whole family, and was recommended by my lady for chaplain to some other noble houses, by which his revenue (besides vales) amounted to about thirty pounds a-year: his sister procured him a scarf from my lord, who had a small design of gallantry upon her; and by his lordship's solicitation he got a lectureship in town of sixty pounds a-year; where he preached constantly in person, in a grave manner, with an audible voice, a style ecclesiastic, and the matter (such as it was) well suited to the intellectuals of his

hearers. Some time after, a country living fell in my lord's disposal; and his lordship, who had now some encouragement given him of success in his amour, bestowed the living on Corusodes, who still kept his lectureship and residence in town; where he was a constant attendant at all meetings relating to charity, without ever contributing farther than his frequent pious exhortations. If any woman of better fashion in the parish happened to be absent from church, they were sure of a visit from him in a day or two, to chide and to dine with them.

He had a select number of poor constantly attending at the street door of his lodging, for whom he was a common solicitor to his former patroness, dropping in his own half-crown among the collection, and taking it out when he disposed of the money. At a person of quality's house, he would never sit down till he was thrice bid, and then upon the corner of the most distant chair. His whole demeanour was formal and starch, which adhered so close, that he could never shake it off in his highest promotion.

His lord was now in high employment at court, and attended by him with the most abject assiduity; and his sister being gone off with child to a private lodging, my lord continued his graces to Corusodes, got him to be a chaplain in ordinary, and in due time a parish in town, and a dignity in the church.

He paid his curates punctually, at the lowest salary, and partly out of the communion money; but gave them good advice in abundance. He married a citizen's widow, who taught him to put out small sums at ten per cent., and brought him acquainted with jobbers in Change Alley. By her dexterity he sold the clerkship of his parish when it became vacant.

He kept a miserable house, but the blame was laid

wholly upon madam; for the good doctor was always at his books, or visiting the sick, or doing other offices of charity and piety in his parish.

He treated all his inferiors of the clergy with a most sanctified pride; was rigorously and universally censorious upon all his brethren of the gown on their first appearance in the world, or while they continued meanly preferred; but gave large allowance to the laity of high rank, or great riches, using neither eyes nor ears for their faults: he was never sensible of the least corruption in courts, parliaments, or ministries, but made the most favourable constructions of all public proceedings; and power, in whatever hands, or whatever party, was always secure of his most charitable opinion. He had many wholesome maxims ready to excuse all miscarriages of state; men are but men; *erunt vitia donec homines;* and, *quod supra nos, nil ad nos;* with several others of equal weight.

It would lengthen my paper beyond measure to trace out the whole system of his conduct: his dreadful apprehensions of Popery; his great moderation toward dissenters of all denominations; with hearty wishes, that, by yielding somewhat on both sides, there might be a general union among Protestants; his short, inoffensive sermons in his turns at court, and the matter exactly suited to the present juncture of prevailing opinions; the arts he used to obtain a mitre, by writing against episcopacy; and the proofs he gave of his loyalty, by palliating or defending the murder of a martyred prince.

Endued with all these accomplishments, we leave him in the full career of success, mounting fast toward the top of the ladder ecclesiastical, which he has a fair probability to reach; without the merit of one single virtue, moderately stocked with the least valuable parts of erudition, utterly devoid of all taste,

judgment, or genius; and, in his grandeur, naturally choosing to haul up others after him, whose accomplishments most resemble his own, except his beloved sons, nephews, or other kindred, be in competition; or, lastly, except his inclinations be diverted by those who have power to mortify or farther advance him.

Eugenio set out from the same university, and about the same time with Corusodes; he had the reputation of an arch lad at school, and was unfortunately possessed with a talent for poetry; on which account he received many chiding letters from his father, and grave advice from his tutor. He did not neglect his college learning, but his chief study was the authors of antiquity, with a perfect knowledge in the Greek and Roman tongues. He could never procure himself to be chosen fellow: for it was objected against him, that he had written verses, and particularly some wherein he glanced at a certain reverend doctor famous for dulness; that he had been seen bowing to ladies, as he met them in the street; and it was proved, that once he had been found dancing in a private family with half a dozen of both sexes.

He was the younger son to a gentleman of good birth, but small estate; and his father dying, he was driven to London to seek his fortune: he got into orders, and became reader in a parish church at twenty pounds a-year; was carried by an Oxford friend to Will's coffeehouse, frequented in those days by men of wit, where in some time he had the bad luck to be distinguished. His scanty salary compelled him to run deep in debt for a new gown and cassock, and now and then forced him to write some paper of wit or humour, or preach a sermon for ten shillings, to supply his necessities. He was a thousand times recommended by his poetical friends to great persons, as a young man of excellent parts who deserved

encouragement, and received a thousand promises; but his modesty, and a generous spirit, which disdained the slavery of continual application and attendance, always disappointed him, making room for vigilant dunces, who were sure to be never out of sight.

He had an excellent faculty in preaching, if he were not sometimes a little too refined, and apt to trust too much to his own way of thinking and reasoning.

When, upon the vacancy of a preferment, he was hardly drawn to attend upon some promising lord, he received the usual answer, "That he came too late, for it had been given to another the very day before." And he had only this comfort left, that everybody said, "It was a thousand pities something could not be done for poor Mr. Eugenio."

The remainder of his story will be despatched in a few words: wearied with weak hopes, and weaker pursuits, he accepted a curacy in Derbyshire of thirty pounds a-year, and when he was five-and-forty, had the great felicity to be preferred by a friend of his father's to a vicarage worth annually sixty pounds, in the most desert parts of Lincolnshire; where, his spirit quite sunk with those reflections that solitude and disappointments bring, he married a farmer's widow, and is still alive, utterly undistinguished and forgotten; only some of the neighbours have accidentally heard that he had been a notable man in his youth.

CONCERNING THAT

UNIVERSAL HATRED

WHICH PREVAILS

AGAINST THE CLERGY.

May 24, 1736.

I HAVE been long considering and conjecturing, what could be the causes of that great disgust, of late, against the clergy of both kingdoms, beyond what was ever known, till that monster and tyrant, Henry VIII., who took away from them, against law, reason, and justice, at least two-thirds of their legal possessions; and whose successors (except Queen Mary) went on with their rapine till the accession of King James I. That detestable tyrant Henry VIII., although he abolished the Pope's power in England, as universal bishop, yet what he did in that article, however just it were in itself, was the mere effect of his irregular appetite, to divorce himself from a wife he was weary of, for a younger and more beautiful woman, whom he afterwards beheaded. But, at the same time, he

was an entire defender of all the Popish doctrines, even those which were the most absurd. And while he put the people to death for denying him to be head of the church, he burned every offender against the doctrines of the Roman faith; and cut off the head of Sir Thomas More, a person of the greatest virtue this kingdom ever produced, for not directly owning him to be head of the church. Among all the princes who ever reigned in the world, there was never so infernal a beast as Henry VIII., in every vice of the most odious kind, without any one appearance of virtue: but cruelty, lust, rapine, and atheism, were his peculiar talents. He rejected the power of the Pope for no other reason than to give his full swing to commit sacrilege, in which no tyrant, since Christianity became national, did ever equal him by many degrees. The abbeys, endowed with lands by the mistaken notion of well-disposed men, were indeed too numerous, and hurtful to the kingdom; and therefore the legislature might, after the Reformation, have justly applied them to some pious or public uses.

In a very few centuries after Christianity became national in most parts of Europe, although the church of Rome had already introduced many corruptions in religion; yet the piety of early Christians, as well as the new converts, was so great, and particularly princes, as well as noblemen and other wealthy persons, that they built many religious houses for those who were inclined to live in a recluse or solitary manner, endowing those monasteries with land. It is true, we read of monks some ages before, who dwelt in caves and cells, in desert places. But when public edifices were erected and endowed, they began gradually to degenerate into idleness, ignorance, avarice, ambition, and luxury, after the usual fate of all human institutions. The Popes, who had already

aggrandized themselves, laid hold of the opportunity to subject all religious houses, with their priors and abbots, to their peculiar authority; whereby those religious orders became of an interest directly different from the rest of mankind, and wholly at the Pope's devotion. I need say no more on this article, so generally known and so frequently treated, or of the frequent endeavours of some other princes, as well as our own, to check the growth, and wealth, and power, of the regulars.

In later times, this mistaken piety, of erecting and endowing abbeys, began to decrease. And therefore, when some new-invented sects of monks and friars began to start up, not being able to procure grants of land, they got leave from the Pope to appropriate the tithes and glebes of certain parishes, as contiguous or near as they could find, obliging themselves to send out some of their body to take care of the people's souls; and if some of those parishes were at too great a distance from the abbey, the monks appointed to attend them were paid for the cure, either a small stipend of a determined sum, or sometimes a third part, or what are now called the vicarial tithes.

As to the church-lands, it hath been the opinion of many writers, that, in England, they amounted to a third part of the whole kingdom. And, therefore, if that wicked prince above-mentioned, when he had cast off the Pope's power, had introduced some reformation in religion, he could not have been blamed for taking away the abbey-lands, by authority of parliament. But, when he continued the most cruel persecution of all those who differed in the least article of the Popish religion, which was then the national and established faith, his seizing on those lands, and applying them to profane uses, was absolute sacrilege, in the strongest sense of the

word; having been bequeathed by princes and pious men to sacred uses.

In the reign of this prince, the church and court of Rome had arrived to such a height of corruption, in doctrine and discipline, as gave great offence to many wise, learned, and pious men, through most parts of Europe; and several countries agreed to make some reformation in religion. But, although a proper and just reformation were allowed to be necessary, even to preserve Christianity itself, yet the passions and vices of men had mingled themselves so far, as to pervert and confound all the good endeavours of those who intended well: and thus the reformation, in every country where it was attempted, was carried on in the most impious and scandalous manner that can possibly be conceived. To which unhappy proceedings we owe all the just reproaches that Roman Catholics have cast upon us ever since. For when the northern kingdoms and states grew weary of the Pope's tyranny, and when their preachers, beginning with the scandalous abuses of indulgences, and proceeding farther to examine several points of faith, had credit enough with their princes, who were in some fear lest such a change might affect the peace of their countries, because their bishops had great influence on the people by their wealth and power; these politic teachers had a ready answer to this purpose: "Sir, your Majesty need not be in any pain or apprehension: take away the lands, and sink the authority of the bishops: bestow those lands on your courtiers, on your nobles, and on your great officers in your army; and then you will be secure of the people." This advice was exactly followed. And in the Protestant monarchies abroad, little more than the shadow of Episcopacy is left; but, in the republics, it is wholly extinct.

In England, the Reformation was brought in after a somewhat different manner, but upon the same principle of robbing the church. However, Henry VIII., with great dexterity, discovered an invention to gratify his insatiable thirst for blood, on both religions.* * * * *

TRACTS

IN SUPPORT OF

THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.

THE SENTIMENTS

OF A

CHURCH OF ENGLAND MAN,

WITH RESPECT TO

RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708.

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It was in consequence of publishing this and the succeeding tract, that the first breach, or rather coolness, arose between Swift and his original friends of the Whig party. He had already stated to Lord Somers, about 1707–8, that, although he felt himself inclined to be a Whig in politics, he was, as to clerical rights, a high churchman, and did not conceive how it was possible that one who wore the habit of a clergyman should be otherwise. Swift, therefore, stated the impolicy of the connivance or encouragement given by the Whigs to those authors who attacked the clerical order, and urged the high probability that their conduct would unite the church as one man to oppose them. In the following tract, he attempts to recommend to the public a union between a high and rigid regard for the church establishment on the one hand, and the principles of civil liberty on the other. He failed, however, in his appeal to the nation, as well as in his private advice to the Whig ministers. It was, indeed, impossible it should be otherwise. High Church and Low Church formed, at this period, the discriminating banners under which Whigs and

Tories respectively arranged themselves, and under which ensigns alone each expected to meet his enemies or his friends. All attempt at reconciling High Church politics to Whiggish principles soon appeared to be desperate; and the interests of his order prevailed with Swift over his favour for the political principles of Somers and Godolphin.

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WHOEVER has examined the conduct and proceedings of both parties, for some years past, whether in or out of power, cannot well conceive it possible to go far toward the extremes of either, without offering some violence to his integrity or understanding. A wise and a good man may indeed be sometimes induced to comply with a number, whose opinion he generally approves, though it be perhaps against his own. But this liberty should be made use of upon very few occasions, and those of small importance, and then only with a view of bringing over his own side, another time, to something of greater and more public moment. But to sacrifice the innocency of a friend, the good of our country, or our own conscience, to the humour, or passion, or interest of a party, plainly shews that either our heads or our hearts are not as they should be: yet this very practice is the fundamental law of each faction among us, as may be obvious to any who will impartially, and without engagement, be at the pains to examine their actions, which, however, is not so easy a task: for it seems a principle in human nature, to incline one way more than another, even in matters where we are wholly unconcerned. And it is a common observation, that in reading a history of facts done a thousand years ago, or standing by at play among those who are perfect strangers to us, we are apt to find our hopes and wishes engaged on

a sudden in favour of one side more than another. No wonder then that we are all so ready to interest ourselves in the course of public affairs, where the most inconsiderable have some real share, and, by the wonderful importance which every man is of to himself, a very great imaginary one.

And, indeed, when the two parties, that divide the whole commonwealth, come once to a rupture, without any hopes left of forming a third, with better principles, to balance the others, it seems every man's duty to choose one of the two sides, though he cannot entirely approve of either; and all pretences to neutrality are justly exploded by both, being too stale and obvious, only intending the safety and ease of a few individuals, while the public is embroiled. This was the opinion and practice of the latter Cato, whom I esteem to have been the wisest and best of all the Romans. But before things proceed to open violence, the truest service a private man may hope to do his country, is, by unbiassing his mind as much as possible, and then endeavouring to moderate between the rival powers; which must needs be owned a fair proceeding with the world, because it is, of all others, the least consistent with the common design of making a fortune, by the merit of an opinion.

I have gone as far as I am able in qualifying myself to be such a moderator: I believe I am no bigot in religion, and I am sure I am none in government. I converse in full freedom with many considerable men of both parties; and if not in equal number, it is purely accidental and personal, as happening to be near the court, and to have made acquaintance there, more under one ministry than another. Then, I am not under the necessity of declaring myself by the prospect of an employment. And,

lastly, if all this be not sufficient, I industriously conceal my name, which wholly exempts me from any hopes and fears in delivering my opinion.

In consequence of this free use of my reason, I cannot possibly think so well or so ill of either party, as they would endeavour to persuade the world of each other, and of themselves. For instance; I do not charge it upon the body of the Whigs or the Tories, that their several principles lead them to introduce presbytery, and the religion of the church of Rome; or a commonwealth, and arbitrary power. For why should any party be accused of a principle, which they solemnly disown and protest against? But to this they have a mutual answer ready: they both assure us, that their adversaries are not to be believed; that they disown their principles out of fear, which are manifest enough, when we examine their practices. To prove this, they will produce instances, on one side, either of avowed Presbyterians, or persons of libertine and atheistical tenets; and on the other of professed Papists, or such as are openly in the interest of the abdicated family. Now it is very natural for all subordinate sects and denominations in a state, to side with some general party, and to choose that which they find to agree with themselves in some general principle. Thus, at the restoration, the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Independents, and other sects, did all, with very good reason, unite and solder up their several schemes, to join against the church; who, without regard to their distinctions, treated them all as equal adversaries. Thus, our present dissenters do very naturally close in with the Whigs, who profess moderation, declare they abhor all thoughts of persecution, and think it hard that those who differ only in a few ceremonies and speculations, should be denied the privilege and profit of serving their

country in the highest employments of state. Thus, the atheists, libertines, despisers of religion and revelation in general, that is to say, all those who usually pass under the name of freethinkers, do properly join with the same body: because they likewise preach up moderation, and are not so overnice to distinguish between an unlimited liberty of conscience and an unlimited freedom of opinion. Then, on the other side, the professed firmness of the Tories for Episcopacy, as an apostolical institution; their aversion to those sects, who lie under the reproach of having once destroyed their constitution, and who, they imagine, by too indiscreet a zeal for reformation, have defaced the primitive model of the church; next, their veneration for monarchical government in the common course of succession, and their hatred to republican schemes: these, I say, are principles which not only the nonjuring zealots profess, but even Papists themselves fall readily in with. And every extreme here mentioned, flings a general scandal upon the whole body it pretends to adhere to.

But surely no man whatsoever ought, in justice or good manners, to be charged with principles he actually disowns, unless his practices do openly, and without the least room for doubt, contradict his profession; not upon small surmises, or because he has the misfortune to have ill men sometimes agree with him in a few general sentiments. However, though the extremes of Whig and Tory seem, with little justice, to have drawn religion into their controversies, wherein they have small concern, yet they both have borrowed one leading principle from the abuse of it: which is, to have built their several systems of political faith, not upon inquiries after truth, but upon opposition to each other, upon injurious appellations, charging their adversaries with

horrid opinions, and then reproaching them for the want of charity; *et neuter falso.*

In order to remove these prejudices, I have thought nothing could be more effectual, than to describe the sentiments of a church of England man, with respect to religion and government. This I shall endeavour to do in such a manner, as may not be liable to the least objection from either party, and which I am confident would be assented to by great numbers in both, if they were not misled to those mutual misrepresentations, by such motives, as they would be ashamed to own.

I shall begin with religion.

And here, though it makes an odd sound, yet it is necessary to say, that whoever professes himself a member of the church of England, ought to believe a God and his providence, together with revealed religion and the divinity of Christ. For besides those many thousands, who (to speak in the phrase of divines) do practically deny all this by the immorality of their lives, there is no small number, who in their conversation and writings, directly, or by consequence, endeavour to overthrow it; yet all these place themselves in the list of the national church, though at the same time (as it is highly reasonable) they are great sticklers for liberty of conscience.

To enter upon particulars: a church of England man has a true veneration for the scheme established among us of ecclesiastic government; and though he will not determine whether Episcopacy be of divine right, he is sure it is most agreeable to primitive institution, fittest of all others for preserving order and purity, and, under its present regulations, best calculated for our civil state: he should therefore think the abolishment of that order among us would prove a mighty scandal and corruption to our

faith, and manifestly dangerous to our monarchy; nay, he would defend it by arms against all the powers on earth, except our own legislature; in which case he would submit, as to a general calamity, a dearth, or a pestilence.

As to rites and ceremonies, and forms of prayer, he allows there might be some useful alterations, and more, which in the prospect of uniting Christians might be very supportable, as things declared in their own nature indifferent; to which he therefore would readily comply, if the clergy or (though this be not so fair a method) if the legislature should direct: yet, at the same time, he cannot altogether blame the former, for their unwillingness to consent to any alteration; which besides the trouble, and perhaps disgrace, would certainly never produce the good effects intended by it. The only condition that could make it prudent and just for the clergy to comply in altering the ceremonial, or any other indifferent part, would be a firm resolution in the legislature to interpose, by some strict and effectual laws, to prevent the rising and spreading of new sects, how plausible soever, for the future; else there must never be an end: and it would be to act like a man, who should pull down and change the ornaments of his house, in compliance to every one who was disposed to find fault as he passed by; which, besides the perpetual trouble and expense, would very much damage, and perhaps in time destroy, the building. Sects in a state seem only tolerated with any reason, because they are already spread; and because it would not be agreeable with so mild a government, or so pure a religion, as ours, to use violent methods against great numbers of mistaken people, while they do not manifestly endanger the constitution of either. But the greatest advocates for general liberty of conscience will allow that they

ought to be checked in their beginnings, if they will allow them to be an evil at all; or, which is the same thing, if they will only grant it were better for the peace of the state, that there should be none. But while the clergy consider the natural temper of mankind in general, or of our own country in particular, what assurances can they have, that any compliances they shall make, will remove the evil of dissension, while the liberty still continues of professing whatever new opinion we please? Or how can it be imagined, that the body of dissenting teachers, who must be all undone by such a revolution, will not cast about for some new objections to withhold their flocks, and draw in fresh proselytes, by some farther innovations or refinements?

Upon these reasons, he is for tolerating such different forms in religious worship as are already admitted, but by no means for leaving it in the power of those who are tolerated, to advance their own models upon the ruin of what is already established; which it is natural for all sects to desire, and which they cannot be justified by any consistent principles if they do not endeavour; and yet, which they cannot succeed in, without the utmost danger to the public peace.

To prevent these inconveniences, he thinks it highly just, that all rewards of trust, profit, or dignity, which the state leaves in the disposal of the administration, should be given only to those whose principles direct them to preserve the constitution in all its parts. In the late affair of occasional conformity, the general argument of those who were against it, was, not to deny it an evil in itself, but that the remedy proposed was violent, untimely, and improper; which is the Bishop of Salisbury's opinion in the speech he made and published against the bill: but however just their fears

or complaints might have been upon that score, he thinks it a little too gross and precipitate to employ their writers already in arguments for repealing the sacramental test, upon no wiser maxim, than that no man should, on the account of conscience, be deprived the liberty of serving his country; a topic which may be equally applied to admit Papists, Atheists, Mahometans, Heathens, and Jews. If the church wants members of its own to employ in the service of the public, or be so unhappily contrived as to exclude from its communions such persons, who are likeliest to have great abilities, it is time it should be altered, and reduced into some more perfect or at least more popular form: but in the meanwhile, it is not altogether improbable, that when those who dislike the constitution are so very zealous in their offers for the service of their country, they are not wholly unmindful of their party, or of themselves.

The Dutch, whose practice is so often quoted to prove and celebrate the great advantages of a general liberty of conscience, have yet a national religion professed by all who bear office among them: but why should they be a precedent for us either in religion or government? our country differs from theirs, as well in situation, soil, and productions of nature, as in the genius and complexion of inhabitants. They are a commonwealth founded on a sudden, by a desperate attempt in a desperate condition, not formed or digested into a regular system by mature thought and reason, but huddled up under the pressure of sudden exigencies; calculated for no long duration, and hitherto subsisting by accident, in the midst of contending powers, who cannot yet agree about sharing it among them. These difficulties do indeed preserve them from any great corruptions, which their crazy constitution

would extremely subject them to in a long peace. That confluence of people, in a persecuting age, to a place of refuge nearest at hand, put them upon the necessity of trade, to which they wisely gave all ease and encouragement: and if we could think fit to imitate them in this last particular, there would need no more to invite foreigners among us; who seem to think no farther than how to secure their property and conscience, without projecting any share in that government which gives them protection, or calling it persecution, if it be denied them. But, I speak it for the honour of our administration, although our sects are not so numerous as those in Holland, which I presume is not our fault, and I hope is not our misfortune, we much excel them, and all Christendom besides, in our indulgence to tender consciences.* One single compliance with the national form of receiving the sacrament, is all we require to qualify any sectary among us for the greatest employments in the state, after which he is at liberty to rejoin his own assemblies for the rest of his life. Besides, I will suppose any of the numerous sects in Holland to have so far prevailed, as to have raised a civil war, destroyed their government and religion, and put their administrators to death; after which, I will suppose the people to have recovered all again, and to have settled on their old foundation. Then I would put a query, whether that sect, which was the unhappy instrument of all this confusion, could reasonably expect to be entrusted for the future with the greatest employments, or indeed to be hardly tolerated among them?

To go on with the sentiments of a church of

* When this was written, there was no law against occasional conformity.

England man: he does not see how that mighty passion for the church, which some men pretend, can well consist with those indignities, and that contempt, they bestow on the persons of the clergy.* It is a strange mark whereby to distinguish high-churchmen, that they are such who imagine the clergy can never be too low. He thinks the maxim these gentlemen are so fond of, that they are for an humble clergy, is a very good one: and so is he, and for an humble laity too, since humility is a virtue, that perhaps equally befits and adorns every station of life.

But then, if the scribblers on the other side freely speak the sentiments of their party, a divine of the church of England cannot look for much better quarter thence. You shall observe nothing more frequent in their weekly papers, than a way of affecting to confound the terms of clergy and High Church, of applying both indifferently, and then loading the latter with all the calumny they can invent. They will tell you, they honour a clergyman; but talk at the same time, as if there were not three in the kingdom who could fall in with their definition.† After the like manner they insult the universities, as poisoned fountains, and corrupters of youth.

Now it seems clear to me, that the Whigs might easily have procured, and maintained, a majority among the clergy, and perhaps in the universities,

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* "I observed very well with what insolence and haughtiness some lords of the High-Church party treated, not only their own chaplains, but all other clergy whatsoever, and thought this was sufficiently recompensed by their professions of zeal to the church."

† "I had likewise observed how the Whig lords took a direct contrary measure, treated the persons of particular clergymen with great courtesy, but showed much ill-will and contempt for the order in general."

if they had not too much encouraged, or connived at, this intemperance of speech and virulence of pen, in the worst and most prostitute of their party; among whom there has been, for some years past, such a perpetual clamour against the ambition, the implacable temper, and the covetousness of the priesthood; such a cant of High Church, and persecution, and being priest-ridden, so many reproaches about narrow principles, or terms of communion; then such scandalous reflections on the universities, for infecting the youth of the nation with arbitrary and Jacobite principles, that it was natural for those, who had the care of religion and education, to apprehend some general design of altering the constitution of both. And all this was the more extraordinary, because it could not easily be forgot, that whatever opposition was made to the usurpations of King James, proceeded altogether from the church of England, and chiefly from the clergy, and one of the universities. For, if it were of any use to recall matters of fact, what is more notorious, than that prince's applying himself first to the church of England? and upon their refusal to fall in with his measures, making the like advances to the dissenters of all kinds, who readily and almost universally complied with him, affecting, in their numerous addresses and pamphlets, the style of our brethren the Roman Catholics; whose interests they put on the same foot with their own: and some of Cromwell's officers took posts in the army raised against the Prince of Orange.* These proceedings of theirs they can only extenuate, by urging the provocations

* De Foe's History of Addresses contains some humbling instances of the applauses with which the sectaries hailed their old enemy, James II., when they saw him engaged in hostility with the established church.

they had met from the church in King Charles's reign; which, though perhaps excusable upon the score of human infirmity, are not, by any means, a plea of merit, equal to the constancy and sufferings of the bishops and clergy, or of the head and fellows of Magdalen College, that furnished the Prince of Orange's declaration with such powerful arguments, to justify and promote the Revolution.

Therefore a church of England man abhors the humour of the age, in delighting to fling scandals upon the clergy in general; which, besides the disgrace to the Reformation, and to religion itself, cast an ignominy upon the kingdom, that it does not deserve. We have no better materials to compound the priesthood of, than the mass of mankind, which, corrupted as it is, those who receive orders must have some vices to leave behind them, when they enter into the church; and if a few do still adhere, it is no wonder, but rather a great one, that they are no worse. Therefore, he cannot think ambition, or love of power, more justly laid to their charge, than to other men's; because that would be to make religion itself, or at least the best constitution of church-government, answerable for the errors and depravity of human nature.

Within these last two hundred years, all sorts of temporal power have been wrested from the clergy, and much of their ecclesiastic, the reason or justice of which proceeding I shall not examine; but that the remedies were a little too violent, with respect to their possessions, the legislature has lately confessed, by the remission of their first-fruits. Neither do the common libellers deny this, who, in their invectives, only tax the church with an insatiable desire of power and wealth, (equally common to all bodies of men, as well as individuals,) but thank God, that the laws have deprived them of both.

However, it is worth observing the justice of parties; the sects among us are apt to complain, and think it hard usage to be reproached now after fifty years, for overturning the state, for the murder of a king, and the indignity of a usurpation; yet these very men, and their partisans, are continually reproaching the clergy, and laying to their charge, the pride, the avarice, the luxury, the ignorance, and superstition of Popish times, for a thousand years past.

He thinks it a scandal to government, that such an unlimited liberty should be allowed, of publishing books against those doctrines in religion, wherein all Christians have agreed; much more, to connive at such tracts as reject all revelation, and, by their consequences, often deny the very being of a God. Surely it is not a sufficient atonement for the writers, that they profess much loyalty to the present government, and sprinkle up and down some arguments in favour of the dissenters; that they dispute, as strenuously as they can, for liberty of conscience, and inveigh largely against all ecclesiastics, under the name of high church; and, in short, under the shelter of some popular principles in politics and religion, undermine the foundations of all piety and virtue.

As he does not reckon every schism of that damnable nature which some would represent, so he is very far from closing with the new opinion of those who would make it no crime at all; and argue at a wild rate, that God Almighty is delighted with the variety of faith and worship, as he is with the varieties of nature. To such absurdities are men carried by the affectation of freethinking, and removing the prejudices of education; under which head, they have for some time begun to list morality and religion. It is certain, that, before the rebellion

in 1642, though the number of Puritans (as they were then called) was as great as it is with us, and though they affected to follow pastors of that denomination, yet those pastors had episcopal ordination, possessed preferments in the church, and were sometimes promoted to bishopricks themselves.* But a breach in the general form of worship was, in those days, reckoned so dangerous and sinful in itself, and so offensive to Roman Catholics at home and abroad, that it was too unpopular to be attempted; neither, I believe, was the expedient then found out, of maintaining separate pastors out of private purses.

When a schism is once spread in a nation, there grows at length a dispute, which are the schismatics. Without entering on the arguments used by both sides among us, to fix the guilt on each other, it is certain, that, in the sense of the law, the schism lies on that side which opposes itself to the religion of the state. I leave it among the divines to dilate upon the danger of schism, as a spiritual evil; but I would consider it only as a temporal one. And I think it clear, that any great separation from the established worship, though to a new one that is more pure and perfect, may be an occasion of endangering the public peace; because it will compose a body always in reserve, prepared to follow any discontented heads, upon the plausible pretext of advancing true religion, and opposing error, superstition, or idolatry. For this reason Plato lays it down as a maxim, that men ought to worship the gods according to the laws of the country; and he introduces Socrates, in his last discourse, utterly

* In the reign of Elizabeth, and even in that of James, the Puritans were not, properly speaking, Dissenters, but, on the contrary, formed a sort of Low-Church party in the national establishment. Archbishop Abbot himself has been considered as a Puritan.

disowning the crime laid to his charge, of teaching new divinities or methods of worship. Thus, the poor Huguenots of France were engaged in a civil war, by the specious pretences of some, who, under the guise of religion, sacrificed so many thousand lives to their own ambition and revenge. Thus was the whole body of Puritans in England drawn to be instruments, or abettors, of all manner of villainy, by the artifices of a few men, whose designs from the first were levelled to destroy the constitution both of religion and government. And thus, even in Holland itself, where it is pretended that the variety of sects live so amicably together, and in such perfect obedience to the magistrate, it is notorious how a turbulent party, joining with the Arminians, did, in the memory of our fathers, attempt to destroy the liberty of that republic. So that, upon the whole, where sects are tolerated in a state, it is fit they should enjoy a full liberty of conscience, and every other privilege of freeborn subjects, to which no power is annexed. And to preserve their obedience upon all emergencies, a government cannot give them too much ease, nor trust them with too little power.

The clergy are usually charged with a persecuting spirit, which they are said to discover by an implacable hatred to all dissenters: and this appears to be more unreasonable, because they suffer less in their interests by a toleration than any of the conforming laity: for while the church remains in its present form, no dissenter can possibly have any share in its dignities, revenues, or power; whereas, by once receiving the sacrament he is rendered capable of the highest employments in the state. And it is very possible, that a narrow education, together with a mixture of human infirmity, may help to beget among some of the clergy in possession, such an

aversion and contempt for all innovators, as physicians are apt to have for empirics, or lawyers for petti-foggers, or merchants for pedlars; but since the number of sectaries does not concern the clergy, either in point of interest or conscience, (it being an evil not in their power to remedy,) it is more fair and reasonable to suppose, their dislike proceeds from the dangers they apprehend to the peace of the commonwealth, in the ruin whereof they must expect to be the first and greatest sufferers.

To conclude this section, it must be observed, that there is a very good word, which has of late suffered much by both parties, I mean moderation; which the one side very justly disowns, and the other as unjustly pretends to. Besides what passes every day in conversation, any man who reads the papers published by Mr. Lesley,* and others of his stamp, must needs conclude, that if this author could make the nation see his adversaries under the colours he paints them in, we have nothing else to do, but rise as one man, and destroy such wretches from the face of the earth. On the other side, how shall we excuse the advocates for moderation? among whom, I could appeal to a hundred papers of universal approbation by the cause they were writ for, which lay such principles to the whole body of the Tories, as, if they were true, and believed, our next business should in prudence be, to erect gibbets in every parish, and hang them out of the way. But I suppose it is presumed, the common people understand raillery, or at least rhetoric, and will not take hyperboles in too literal a sense; which, however, in some junctures might prove a desperate experiment. And this is moderation in the modern sense of the word,

* The champion of the Jacobites, whose cause he defended in a periodical paper, called The Rehearsal.

to which, speaking impartially, the bigots of both parties are equally entitled.

SECTION II.

The Sentiments of a Church of England Man with respect to Government.

We look upon it as a very just reproach, though we cannot agree where to fix it, that there should be so much violence and hatred in religious matters, among men who agree in all fundamentals, and only differ in some ceremonies, or, at most, mere speculative points. Yet, is not this frequently the case between contending parties in a state? For instance: do not the generality of Whigs and Tories among us, profess to agree in the same fundamentals, their loyalty to the Queen, their abjuration of the Pretender, the settlement of the crown in the protestant line, and a revolution principle? their affection to the church established, with toleration of dissenters? nay, sometimes they go farther, and pass over into each other's principles; the Whigs become great assertors of the prerogative, and the Tories of the people's liberty; these, crying down almost the whole set of bishops, and those, defending them; so that the differences, fairly stated, would be much of a sort with those in religion among us, and amount to little more than, who should take place, or go in and out first, or kiss the Queen's hand; and what are these but a few court ceremonies? or who should be in the ministry? and what is that to the body of the nation but a mere speculative point? yet I think it must be allowed, that no religious sects ever

carried their mutual aversions to greater heights, than our state-parties have done; who, the more to inflame their passions, have mixed religious and civil animosities together; borrowing one of their appellations from the church, with the addition of High and Low, how little soever their disputes relate to the term, as it is generally understood.

I now proceed to deliver the sentiments of a church of England man, with respect to government.

He does not think the church of England so narrowly calculated, that it cannot fall in with any regular species of government, nor does he think any one regular species of government more acceptable to God than another. The three generally received in the schools, have all of them their several perfections, and are subject to their several depravations. However, few states are ruined by any defect in their institution, but generally by the corruption of manners; against which, the best institution is no longer a security; and without which, a very ill one may subsist and flourish; whereof there are two pregnant instances now in Europe. The first is, the aristocracy of Venice, which, founded upon the wisest maxims, and digested by a great length of time, has, in our age, admitted so many abuses, through the degeneracy of the nobles, that the period of its duration seems to approach. The other is, the united republics of the States-general, where a vein of temperance, industry, parsimony, and a public spirit, running through the whole body of the people, has preserved an infant commonwealth, of an untimely birth and sickly constitution, for above an hundred years, through so many dangers and difficulties, as a much more healthy one could never have struggled against, without those advantages.

Where security of person and property are pre-

served by laws, which none but the whole can repeal, there the great ends of government are provided for, whether the administration be in the hands of one or of many. Where any one person, or body of men, who do not represent the whole, seize into their hands the power in the last resort, there is properly no longer a government, but what Aristotle and his followers call the abuse and corruption of one. This distinction excludes arbitrary power, in whatever numbers; which notwithstanding all that Hobbes, Filmer, and others, have said to its advantage, I look upon as a greater evil than anarchy itself, as much as a savage is in a happier state of life than a slave at the oar.

It is reckoned ill manners, as well as unreasonable, for men to quarrel upon difference in opinion; because that is usually supposed to be a thing which no man can help in himself: but this I do not conceive to be a universal infallible maxim, except in those cases where the question is pretty equally disputed among the learned and the wise: where it is otherwise, a man of tolerable reason, some experience, and willing to be instructed, may apprehend he is got into a wrong opinion, though the whole course of his mind and inclination would persuade him to believe it true; he may be convinced that he is in an error, though he does not see where it lies, by the bad effects of it in the common conduct of his life, and by observing those persons, for whose wisdom and goodness he has the greatest deference, to be of a contrary sentiment. According to Hobbes's comparison of reasoning with casting up accounts, whoever finds a mistake in the sum total, must allow himself out, though, after repeated trials, he may not see in which article he has misreckoned. I will instance in one opinion, which I look upon every man obliged in conscience to quit,

or in prudence to conceal; I mean, that whoever argues in defence of absolute power in a single person, though he offers the old plausible plea, that it is his opinion, which he cannot help, unless he be convinced, ought, in all free states, to be treated as the common enemy of mankind. Yet this is laid as a heavy charge upon the clergy of the two reigns before the Revolution, who, under the terms of passive obedience and non-resistance, are said to have preached up the unlimited power of the prince, because they found it a doctrine that pleased the court, and made way for their preferment. And I believe there may be truth enough in this accusation to convince us that human frailty will too often interpose itself among persons of the holiest function. However, it may be offered in excuse for the clergy, that in the best societies there are some ill members, which a corrupted court and ministry will industriously find out and introduce. Besides, it is manifest, that the greater number of those who held and preached this doctrine, were misguided by equivocal terms, and by perfect ignorance in the principles of government, which they had not made any part of their study. The question originally put, and as I remember to have heard it disputed in public schools, was this, Whether, under any pretence whatsoever, it may be lawful to resist the supreme magistrate? which was held in the negative; and this is certainly the right opinion. But many of the clergy, and other learned men, deceived by dubious expression, mistook the object to which passive obedience was due. By the supreme magistrate is properly understood the legislative power, which in all governments must be absolute and unlimited. But the word magistrate, seeming to denote a single person, and to express the executive power, it came to pass, that the obedience due to the legis-

lature was, for want of knowing or considering this easy distinction, misapplied to the administration. Neither is it any wonder, that the clergy, or other well-meaning people, should fall into this error, which deceived Hobbes himself, so far as to be the foundation of all the political mistakes in his books; where he perpetually confounds the executive with the legislative power, though all well-instituted states have ever placed them in different hands, as may be obvious to those who know anything of Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and other republics of Greece, as well as the greater ones of Carthage and Rome.

Besides, it is to be considered, that when these doctrines began to be preached among us, the kingdom had not quite worn out the memory of that horrid rebellion, under the consequences of which it had groaned almost twenty years. And a weak prince, in conjunction with a succession of most prostitute ministers, began again to dispose the people to new attempts, which it was, no doubt, the clergy's duty to endeavour to prevent; though some of them, for want of knowledge in temporal affairs, and others, perhaps, from a worse principle, proceeded upon a topic, that, strictly followed, would enslave all mankind.

Among other theological arguments, made use of in those times in praise of monarchy, and justification of absolute obedience to a prince, there seemed to be one of a singular nature: it was urged, that Heaven was governed by a monarch, who had none to control his power, but was absolutely obeyed: then it followed, that earthly governments were the more perfect, the nearer they imitated the government in Heaven. All which I look upon as the strongest argument against despotic power, that ever was offered; since no reason can possibly be assigned, why it is best for the world, that God

Almighty has such a power, which does not directly prove, that no mortal man should ever have the like.

But, though a church of England man thinks every species of government equally lawful, he does not think them equally expedient; or for every country indifferently. There may be something in the climate, naturally disposing men toward one sort of obedience; as is manifest all over Asia, where we never read of any commonwealth, except some small ones on the western coasts, established by the Greeks. There may be a great deal in the situation of a country, and in the present genius of the people. It has been observed, that the temperate climates usually run into moderate governments, and the extremes into despotic power. It is a remark of Hobbes, that the youth of England are corrupted in their principles of government, by reading the authors of Greece and Rome, who writ under commonwealths. But it might have been more fairly offered for the honour of liberty, that while the rest of the known world was overrun with the arbitrary government of single persons, arts and sciences took their rise, and flourished, only in those few small territories, where the people were free. And though learning may continue after liberty is lost, as it did in Rome for a while, upon the foundations laid under the commonwealth, and the particular patronage of some emperors, yet it hardly ever began under a tyranny in any nation; because slavery is of all things the greatest clog and obstacle to speculation. And, indeed, arbitrary power is but the first natural step, from anarchy or the savage life; the adjusting of power and freedom being an effect and consequence of maturer thinking: and this is nowhere so duly regulated, as in a limited monarchy: because I believe it may pass for a maxim in state, that the administration cannot be placed in too few hands,

nor the legislature in too many. Now, in this material point, the constitution of the English govenment far exceeds all others at this time on the earth; to which the present establishment of the church does so happily agree, that I think whoever is an enemy to either, must of necessity be so to both.

He thinks, as our monarchy is constituted, an hereditary right is much to be preferred before election. Because the goverment here, especially by some late amendments, is so regularly disposed in all its parts, that it almost executes itself. And therefore, upon the death of a prince among us, the administration goes on without any rub or interruption. For the same reasons, we have less to apprehend from the weakness or fury of our monarchs, who have such wise councils to guide the first, and laws to restrain the other. And therefore this hereditary right should be kept so sacred, as never to break the succession, unless where the preserving of it may endanger the constitution; which is not from any intrinsic merit, or unalienable right, in a particular family, but to avoid the consequences that usually attend the ambition of competitors, to which elective kingdoms are exposed; and which is the only obstacle to hinder them from arriving at the greatest perfection, that government can possibly reach. Hence appears the absurdity of that distinction, between a king *de facto*, and one *de jure*, with respect to us. For every limited monarch is a king *de jure*, because he governs by the consent of the whole, which is authority sufficient to abolish all precedent right. If a king come in by conquest, he is no longer a limited monarch; if he afterward consent to limitations, he becomes immediately king *de jure* for the same reason.

The great advocates for succession, who affirm it

ought not to be violated upon any regard or consideration whatsoever, do insist much upon one argument, that seems to carry little weight. They would have it, that a crown is a prince's birthright, and ought at least to be as well secured to him and his posterity as the inheritance of any private man; in short, that he has the same title to his kingdom which every individual has to his property: now the consequence of this doctrine must be, that as a man may find several ways to waste, misspend, or abuse, his patrimony, without being answerable to the laws; so a king may in like manner do what he will with his own; that is, he may squander and misapply his revenues, and even alienate the crown, without being called to an account by his subjects. They allow such a prince to be guilty, indeed, of much folly and wickedness, but for these he is answerable to God, as every private man must be, that is guilty of mismanagement in his own concerns. Now, the folly of this reasoning will best appear by applying it in a parallel case. Should any man argue, that a physician is supposed to understand his own art best; that the law protects and encourages his profession; and therefore, although he should manifestly prescribe poison to all his patients, whereof they should immediately die, he cannot be justly punished but is answerable only to God: or should the same be offered in behalf of a divine, who would preach against religion and moral duties; in either of these two cases, everybody would find out the sophistry, and presently answer, that although common men are not exactly skilled in the composition or application of medicines, or in prescribing the limits of duty; yet the difference between poisons and remedies, is easily known by their effects; and common reason soon distinguishes between virtue and vice: and it must be necessary to forbid both

these the farther practice of their professions, because their crimes are not purely personal to the physician or the divine, but destructive to the public. All which is infinitely stronger in respect to a prince, in whose good or ill conduct, the happiness or misery of a whole nation is included: whereas it is of small consequence to the public, farther than example, how any private person manages his property.

But granting that the right of a lineal successor to a crown, were upon the same foot with the property of a subject; still it may at any time be transferred by the legislative power, as other properties frequently are. The supreme power in a state can do no wrong, because whatever that does, is the action of all: and when the lawyers apply this maxim to the king, they must understand it only in that sense, as he is administrator of the supreme power; otherwise it is not universally true, but may be controlled in several instances easy to produce.

And these are the topics we must proceed upon, to justify our exclusion of the young Pretender in France; that of his suspected birth being merely popular, and therefore not made use of, as I remember, since the Revolution, in any speech, vote, or proclamation, where there was an occasion to mention him.

As to the abdication of King James, which the advocates on that side look upon to have been forcible and unjust, and consequently void in itself, I think a man may observe every article of the English church, without being in much pain about it. It is not unlikely that all doors were laid open for his departure, and perhaps not without the privity of the Prince of Orange, as reasonably concluding, that the kingdom might be better settled in his absence: but to affirm he had any cause to apprehend the same treatment with his father, is an

improbable scandal flung upon the nation, by a few bigotted French scribblers, or the invidious assertion of a ruined party at home, in the bitterness of their souls; not one material circumstance agreeing with those in 1648; and the greatest part of the nation having preserved the utmost horror for that ignominious murder: but whether his removal were caused by his own fears, or other men's artifices, it is manifest to me, that supposing the throne to be vacant, which was the foot the nation went upon, the body of the people were thereupon left at liberty to choose what form of government they pleased, by themselves, or their representatives.

The only difficulty of any weight against the proceedings at the Revolution, is an obvious objection, to which the writers upon that subject have not yet given a direct or sufficient answer, as if they were in pain at some consequences which they apprehend those of the contrary opinion might draw from it. I will repeat this objection, as it was offered me some time ago, with all its advantages, by a very pious, learned, and worthy gentleman of the nonjuring party.*

The force of his argument turned upon this: that the laws made by the supreme power, cannot otherwise than by the supreme power be annulled: that this consisting in England of a king, lords, and commons, whereof each have a negative voice, no two of them can repeal or enact a law, without consent of the third; much less may any one of them be entirely excluded from its part of the legislature, by a vote of the other two. That all these maxims were openly violated at the Revolution; where an assembly of the nobles and people,

* Mr. Nelson, author of the Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England.

not summoned by the king's writ, (which was an essential part of the constitution,) and consequently no lawful meeting, did merely upon their own authority, declare the king to have abdicated, the throne vacant, and give the crown by a vote to a nephew, when there were three children to inherit; though by the fundamental laws of the realm, the next heir is immediately to succeed. Neither does it appear, how a prince's abdication can make any other sort of vacancy in the throne than would be caused by his death; since he cannot abdicate for his children, (who claim their right of succession by act of parliament,) otherwise than by his own consent in form to a bill from the two houses.

And this is the difficulty that seems chiefly to stick with the most reasonable of those who, from a mere scruple of conscience, refuse to join with us upon the revolution principle; but for the rest, are, I believe, as far from loving arbitrary government as any others can be, who are born under a free constitution, and are allowed to have the least share of common good sense.

In this objection there are two questions included: first, Whether, upon the foot of our constitution, as it stood in the reign of the late King James, a king of England may be deposed? The second is, Whether the people of England, convened by their own authority, after the king had withdrawn himself in the manner he did, had power to alter the succession.

As for the first, it is a point I shall not presume to determine; and shall therefore only say, that to any man who holds the negative, I would demand the liberty of putting the case as strongly as I please. I will suppose a prince limited by laws like ours, yet running into a thousand caprices of cruelty, like Nero or Caligula; I will suppose him

to murder his mother and his wife; to commit incest, to ravish matrons, to blow up the senate, and burn his metropolis; openly to renounce God and Christ, and worship the devil; these and the like exorbitances, are in the power of a single person to commit, without the advice of a ministry, or assistance of an army. And if such a king, as I have described, cannot be deposed but by his own consent in parliament, I do not well see how he can be resisted, or what can be meant by a limited monarchy; or what signifies the people's consent in making and repealing laws, if the person who administers has no tie but conscience, and is answerable to none but God. I desire no stronger proof that an opinion must be false, than to find very great absurdities annexed to it, and there cannot be greater than in the present case; for it is not a bare speculation that kings may run into such enormities as are above-mentioned: the practice may be proved by examples, not only drawn from the first Cæsars, or later emperors, but many modern princes of Europe; such as Peter the Cruel, Philip the Second of Spain, John Basilovitz of Muscovy, and in our own nation, King John, Richard the Third, and Henry the Eighth. But there cannot be equal absurdities supposed in maintaining the contrary opinion; because it is certain, that princes have it in their power to keep a majority on their side, by any tolerable administration, till provoked by continual oppressions; no man indeed can then answer where the madness of the people will stop.

As to the second part of the objection, Whether the people of England, convened by their own authority, upon King James's precipiate departure, had power to alter the succession?

In answer to this, I think it is manifest, from the

practice of the wisest nations, and who seem to have had the truest notions of freedom, that, when a prince was laid aside for mal-administration, the nobles and people, if they thought it necessary for the public weal, did resume the administration of the supreme power, (the power itself having been always in them,) and did not only alter the succession, but often the very form of government too, because they believed there was no natural right in one man to govern another, but that all was by institution, force, or consent. Thus, the cities of Greece, when they drove out their tyrannical kings, either chose others from a new family, or abolished the kingly government, and became free states. Thus the Romans, upon the expulsion of Tarquin, found it inconvenient for them to be subject any longer to the pride, the lust, the cruelty, and arbitrary will of single persons, and therefore, by general consent, entirely altered the whole frame of their government. Nor do I find the proceedings of either, in this point, to have been condemned by any historian of the succeeding ages.

But a great deal has been already said by other writers upon this invidious and beaten subject: therefore I shall let it fall, though the point is commonly mistaken, especially by the lawyers; who, of all others, seem least to understand the nature of government in general; like under-workmen, who are expert enough at making a single wheel in a clock, but are utterty ignorant how to adjust the several parts, or regulate the movements.

To return, therefore, from this digression: It is a church of England man's opinion, that the freedom of a nation consists in an absolute unlimited legislative power, wherein the whole body of the people are fairly represented; and an executive duly limited: because on this side likewise, there may be dangerous degrees, and a very ill extreme. For, when

two parties in a state are pretty equal in power, pretensions, merit, and virtue, (for these two last are, with relation to parties and a court, quite different things,) it has been the opinion of the best writers upon government, that a prince ought not in any sort to be under the guidance or influence of either; because he declines by this means from his office of presiding over the whole, to be the head of a party; which, besides the indignity, renders him answerable for all public mismanagements, and the consequences of them; and in whatever state this happens, there must either be a weakness in the prince or ministry; or else the former is too much restrained by the nobles, or those who represent the people.

To conclude: a church of England man may, with prudence and a good conscience, approve the professed principles of one party more than the other, according as he thinks they best promote the good of church and state; but he will never be swayed by passion or interest, to advance an opinion, merely because it is that of the party he most approves; which one single principle he looks upon as the root of all our civil animosities. To enter into a party, as into an order of friars, with so resigned an obedience to superiors, is very unsuitable both with the civil and religious liberties we so zealously assert. Thus the understandings of a whole senate are often enslaved, by three or four leaders on each side, who, instead of intending the public weal, have their hearts wholly set upon ways and means, how to get or to keep employments. But to speak more at large, how has this spirit of faction mingled itself with the mass of the people, changed their nature and manners, and the very genius of the nation! broke all the laws of charity, neighbourhood, alliance, and hospitality; destroyed all ties of friendship, and divided families against themselves! and no wonder

it should be so, when, in order to find out the character of a person, instead of inquiring whether he be a man of virtue, honour, piety, wit, good sense, or learning; the modern question is only, whether he be a Whig or a Tory; under which terms all good and ill qualities are included.

Now, because it is a point of difficulty to choose an exact middle between two ill extremes, it may be worth inquiring, in the present case, which of these a wise and good man would rather seem to avoid: taking therefore their own good and ill characters, with due abatements and allowances for partiality and passion, I should think, that in order to preserve the constitution entire in church and state, whoever has a true value for both, would be sure to avoid the extremes of Whig, for the sake of the former; and the extremes of Tory, on account of the latter.

I have now said all that I could think convenient, upon so nice a subject, and find I have the ambition, common with other reasoners, to wish at least that both parties may think me in the right; which would be of some use to those who have any virtue left, but are blindly drawn into the extravagancies of either, upon false representations, to serve the ambition or malice of designing men, without any prospect of their own. But if that is not to be hoped for, my next wish should be, that both might think me in the wrong; which I would understand as an ample justification of myself, and a sure ground to believe, that I have proceeded at least with impartiality, and perhaps with truth.

SOME ARGUMENTS

AGAINST

ENLARGING THE POWER OF BISHOPS,

IN LETTING LEASES.*

—o—

Mihi credite, major hæreditas venit unicuique vestrûm in iisdem boni a jure et a legibus, quam ab iis a quibus illa ipsa bona relicta sunt.—CICERO *pro A. Cæcina.*

—o—

October 21, 1723.

IN handling this subject, I shall proceed wholly upon the supposition, that those of our party who profess themselves members of the church established, and under the apostolical government of bishops, do desire the continuance and transmission

* This tract was written in 1723, when the measure therein reprobated was under consideration. Swift considered it as an indirect mode of gratifying the existing bishops, whom he did not regard with peculiar respect or complacency, at the expense of the church establishment, to which he was attached with most sincere devotion. The spirit of his opposition is, therefore, in this instance, peculiarly caustic. He had to plead, however, that his own practice was as strict as the self-denial he expected from the bishops. He never took fines for renewal of leases of the chapter-lands, but always preferred raising the rent, as calculated to promote the future value of the living, although less advantageous to the immediate incumbent.

of it to posterity, at least in as good a condition as it is at present; because, as this discourse is not calculated for dissenters of any kind, so neither will it suit the talk or sentiments of those persons, who, with the denomination of churchmen, are oppressors of the inferior clergy, and perpetually quarrelling at the great incomes of the bishops; which is a traditional cant delivered down from former times, and continued with great reason, although it be near 200 years since almost three parts in four of the church revenues have been taken from the clergy, beside the spoils that have been gradually made ever since of glebes and other land, by the confusion of times, the fraud of encroaching neighbours, or the power of oppressors too great to be encountered.

About the time of the Reformation, many popish bishops of this kingdom, knowing they must have been soon ejected if they would not change their religion, made long leases and fee-farms of great part of their lands, reserving very inconsiderable rents, sometimes only a chiefry, by a power they assumed directly contrary to many ancient canons, yet consistent enough with the common law. This trade held on for many years after the bishops became Protestants; and some of their names are still remembered with infamy, on account of enriching their families by such sacrilegious alienations. By these means episcopal revenues were so low reduced, that three or four sees were often united to make a tolerable competency. For some remedy to this evil, King James the First, by a bounty that became a good Christian prince, bestowed several forfeited lands on the northern bishoprics: but in all other parts of the kingdom, the church continued still in the same distress and poverty; some of the sees hardly possessing enough to maintain a country vicar. About the middle of King Charles the First's

reign, the legislature here thought fit to put a stop at least to any farther alienations; and so a law was enacted, prohibiting all bishops, and other ecclesiastical corporations, from setting their lands for above the term of twenty-one years; the rent reserved to be one-half of the real value of such lands at the time they were set, without which condition the lease to be void.

Soon after the restoration of King Charles the Second, the parliament, taking into consideration the miserable estate of the church, certain lands, by way of augmentation, were granted to eight bishops in the act of settlement, and confirmed in the act of explanation; of which bounty, as I remember, three sees were in a great measure defeated; but by what accidents it is not here of any importance to relate.

This at present is the condition of the church in Ireland with regard to episcopal revenues: which I have thus briefly (and perhaps imperfectly) deduced, for some information to those whose thoughts do not lead them to such considerations.

By virtue of the statute already mentioned, under King Charles the First, limiting ecclesiastical bodies to the term of twenty-one years under the reserved rent of half real value, the bishops have had some share in the gradual rise of lands, without which they could not have been supported with any common decency that might become their station. It is above eighty years since the passing of that act: the see of Meath, one of the best in the kingdom, was then worth about £400 *per annum;* the poorer ones in the same proportion. If this were their present condition, I cannot conceive how they would have been able to pay for their patents, or buy their robes; but this will certainly be the condition of their successors, if such a bill should pass, as they

say is now intended, which I will suppose; and of which I believe many persons, who may give a vote for it, are not aware.

However, this is the act which is now attempted to be repealed, or at least eluded; some are for giving bishops leave to let fee-farms, others would allow them to let leases for lives; and the most moderate would repeal that clause, by which the bishops are bound to let their lands at half value.

The reasons for the rise of value in lands are of two kinds. Of the first kind, are long peace and settlement after the devastations of war; plantations, improvements of bad soil, recovery of bogs and marshes, advancement of trade and manufactures, increase of inhabitants, encouragement of agriculture, and the like.

But there is another reason for the rise of land, more gradual, constant, and certain; which will have its effects in countries that are very far from flourishing in any of the advantages I have just mentioned; I mean the perpetual decrease in the value of gold and silver. I shall discourse upon these two different kinds, with a view toward the bill now attempted.

As to the first: I cannot see how this kingdom is at any height of improvement, while four parts in five of the plantations for thirty years past have been real disimprovements; nine in ten of the quick-set hedges being ruined for want of care or skill. And as to forest trees, they being often taken out of woods, and planted in single rows on the tops of ditches, it is impossible they should grow to be of use, beauty, or shelter. Neither can it be said, that the soil of Ireland is improved to its full height while so much lies all winter under water, and the bogs made almost desperate by the ill cutting of the turf. There has indeed been some little improve-

ment in the manufactures of linen and woollen, although very short of perfection; but our trade was never in so low a condition; and as to agriculture, of which all wise nations have been so tender, the desolation made in the country by engrossing graziers, and the great yearly importation of corn from England, are lamentable instances under what discouragement it lies.

But, notwithstanding all these mortifications, I suppose there is no well-wisher to his country without a little hope, that in time the kingdom may be on a better foot in some of the articles above mentioned. But it would be hard, if ecclesiastical bodies should be the only persons excluded from any share in public advantages, which yet can never happen, without a greater share of profit to their tenants: if God sends rain equally upon the just and the unjust, why should those who wait at his altars, and are instructors of the people, be cut off from partaking in the general benefits of law or of nature?

But, as this way of reasoning may seem to bear a more favourable eye to the clergy, than perhaps will suit with the present disposition or fashion of the age; I shall therefore dwell more largely upon the second reason for the rise of land, which is the perpetual decrease of the value of gold and silver.

This may be observed from the course of the Roman history above two thousand years before those inexhaustible silver mines of Potosi were known. The value of an obolus, and of every other coin, between the time of Romulus and that of Augustus, gradually sunk above five parts in six, as appears by several passages out of the best authors. And yet the prodigious wealth of that state did not arise from the increase of bullion in the world by the discovery of new mines, but from a much more accidental cause, which was the spreading of their conquests,

and thereby importing into Rome and Italy the riches of the east and west.

When the seat of empire was removed to Constantinople, the tide of money flowed that way without ever returning; and was scattered in Asia. But when that mighty empire was overthrown by the northern people, such a stop was put to all trade and commerce, that vast sums of money were buried, to escape the plundering of the conquerors; and what remained was carried off by those ravagers.

It were no difficult matter to compute the value of money in England during the Saxon reigns; but the monkish and other writers since the Conquest, have put the matter in a clearer light, by the several accounts they have given us of the value of corn and cattle, in years of dearth and plenty. Every one knows that King John's whole portion, before he came to the crown, was but five thousand pounds, without a foot of land.

I have likewise seen the steward's account of an ancient noble family in England, written in Latin between three and four hundred years ago, with the several prices of wine and victuals, to confirm my observations.

I have been at the trouble of computing, (as others have done,) the different values of money for about four hundred years past. Henry, Duke of Lancaster, who lived about that period, founded an hospital at Leicester, for a certain number of old men, charging his lands with a groat a week to each for their maintenance, which is to this day duly paid them. In those times, a penny was equal to tenpence halfpenny and somewhat more than half-a-farthing in ours; which makes about eight ninths' difference.

This is plain also from the old custom upon many estates in England, to let for leases of lives, (renewable at pleasure,) where the reserved rent is usually

about twelvepence a pound, which then was near the half real value: and although the fines be not fixed, yet the landlord gets altogether not above three shillings in the pound of the worth of his land: and the tenants are so wedded to this custom, that if the owner suffer three lives to expire, none of them will take a lease on other conditions; or, if he brings in a foreigner, who will agree to pay a reasonable rent, the other tenants, by all manner of injuries, will make that foreigner so uneasy, that he must be forced to quit the farm; as the late Earl of Bath felt, by the experience of above ten thousand pounds' loss.

The gradual decrease for about two hundred years after, was not considerable, and therefore I do not rely on the account given by some historians, that Harry the Seventh left behind him eighteen hundred thousand pounds; for although the West Indies were discovered before his death, and although he had the best talents and instruments for exacting money ever possessed by any prince since the time of Vespasian, (whom he resembled in many particulars,) yet I conceive, that in his days, the whole coin of England could hardly amount to such a sum. For, in the reign of Philip and Mary, Sir Thomas Cokayne, of Derbyshire, the best housekeeper of his quality in the county, allowed his lady fifty pounds a-year for maintaining the family, one pound a-year wages to each servant, and two pounds to the steward; as I was told by a person of quality, who had seen the original account of his economy. Now this sum of fifty pounds, added to the advantages of a large domain, might be equal to about five hundred pounds a-year at present, or somewhat more than four-fifths.

The great plenty of silver in England began in Queen Elizabeth's reign, when Drake and others

took vast quantities of coin and bullion from the Spaniards, either upon their own American coasts, or in their return to Spain. However, so much has been imported annually from that time to this, that the value of money in England, and most parts of Europe, is sunk above one-half within the space of a hundred years, notwithstanding the great export of silver for about eighty years past to the East Indies, from whence it never returns. But gold, not being liable to the same accident, and by new discoveries growing every day more plentiful, seems in danger of becoming a drug.

This has been the progress of the value of money in former ages, and must of necessity continue so for the future, without some new invasion of Goths and Vandals, to destroy law, property, and religion, alter the very face of nature, and turn the world upside down.

I must repeat, that what I am to say upon the subject is intended only for the conviction of those among our own party, who are true lovers of the church, and would be glad it should continue, in a tolerable degree of prosperity, to the end of the world.

The church is supposed to last for ever, both in its discipline and doctrine; which is a privilege common to every petty corporation, who must likewise observe the laws of their foundation. If a gentleman's estate, which now yields him a thousand pounds a-year, had been set for ever at the highest value, even in the flourishing days of King Charles the Second, would it now amount to above four or five hundred at most? What if this had happened two or three hundred years ago; would the reserved rent at this day be any more than a small chiefry? Suppose the revenues of a bishop to have been under the same circumstances: could he now be able

to perform works of hospitality and charity? Thus, if the revenues of a bishop be limited to a thousand pounds a-year, how will his successor be in a condition to support his station with decency, when the same denomination of money shall not answer a half, a quarter, or an eighth part, of the sum? which must unavoidably be the consequence of any bill to elude the limiting act, whereby the church was preserved from utter ruin.

The same reason holds good in all corporations whatsoever; who cannot follow a more pernicious practice than that of granting perpetuities, for which many of them smart to this day; although the leaders among them are often so stupid as not to perceive it, or sometimes so knavish as to find their private account in cheating the community.

Several colleges in Oxford were aware of this growing evil about an hundred years ago; and instead of limiting their rents to a certain sum of money, prevailed with their tenants to pay the price of so many barrels of corn, to be valued as the market went at two seasons (as I remember) in the year. For a barrel of corn is of a real intrinsic value, which gold and silver are not: and by this invention, these colleges have preserved a tolerable subsistence for their fellows and students to this day.

The present bishops will, indeed, be no sufferers by such a bill; because, their ages considered, they cannot expect to see any great decrease in the value of money; or at worst they can make it up in the fines, which will probably be greater than usual upon the change of leases into fee-farms or lives, or without the power of obliging their tenants to a real half value. And, as I cannot well blame them for taking such advantages, (considering the nature of human kind,) when the question is only, whether the money shall be put into their own or another man's pocket;

so they will never be excusable before God or man, if they do not to their death oppose, declare, and protest against any such bill, as must in its consequences complete the ruin of the church, and of their own order in this kingdom.

If the fortune of a private person be diminished by the weakness or inadvertency of his ancestors, in letting leases for ever at low rents, the world lies open to his industry for purchasing more: but the church is barred by a dead hand; or, if it were otherwise, yet the custom of making bequests to it, has been out of practice for almost two hundred years, and a great deal directly contrary has been its fortune.

I have been assured by a person of some consequence, to whom I am likewise obliged for the account of some other facts already related, that the late Bishop of Salisbury* (the greatest Whig of that bench in his days) confessed to him, that the liberty which bishops in England have of letting leases for lives, would, in his opinion, be one day the ruin of Episcopacy there; and thought the church in this kingdom happy by the limitation act.

And have we not already found the effect of this different proceeding in both kingdoms? have not two English prelates quitted their peerage and seats in parliament, in a nation of freedom, for the sake of a more ample revenue even in this unhappy kingdom, rather than lie under the mortification of living below their dignity at home? for which, however, they cannot be justly censured. I know, indeed, some persons, who offer as an argument for repealing the limiting bill, that it may in future ages prevent the practice of providing this kingdom with bishops from England, when the only temptation will be

* Dr. Burnet.

removed. And they allege, that as things have gone for some years past, gentlemen will grow discouraged from sending their sons to the university, and from suffering them to enter into holy orders, when they are likely to languish under a curacy or small vicarage to the end of their lives; but this is all a vain imagination; for the decrease in the value of money will equally affect both kingdoms; and, besides, when bishoprics here grow too small to invite over men of credit and consequence, they will be left more fully to the disposal of a chief governor, who can never fail of some worthless illiterate chaplain, fond of a title and precedence. Thus will that whole bench, in an age or two, be composed of mean, ignorant, fawning gownmen, humble suppliants and dependants upon the court for a morsel of bread, and ready to serve every turn that shall be demanded from them, in hopes of getting some *commendam* tacked to their sees; which must then be the trade, as it is now too much in England, to the great discouragement of the inferior clergy. Neither is that practice without example among us.

It is now about eighty-five years since the passing of that limiting act, and there is but one instance in the memory of man, of a bishop's lease broken upon the plea of not being statutable; which, in everybody's opinion, could have been lost by no other person than he who was then tenant, and happened to be very ungracious in his county. In the present Bishop of Meath's case, that plea did not avail, although the lease were notoriously unstatutable; the rent reserved being, as I have been told, not a seventh part of the real value; yet the jury, upon their oaths, very gravely found it to be according to the statute; and one of them was heard to say, that he would eat his shoes before he would give a verdict for the bishop. A very few more have made

the same attempt with as little success. Every bishop, and other ecclesiastical body, reckon forty pounds in an hundred to be a reasonable half value; or if it be only a third part, it seldom or never breeds any difference between landlord or tenant. But when the rent is from five to nine or ten parts less than the worth, the bishop, if he consults the good of his see, will be apt to expostulate; and the tenant, if he be an honest man, will have some regard to the reasonableness and justice of the demand, so as to yield to a moderate advancement, rather than engage in a suit, where law and equity are directly against him. By these means the bishops have been so true to their trusts, as to procure some small share in the advancement of rents; although it be notorious that they do not receive the third penny (fines included) of the real value of their lands throughout the kingdom.

I was never able to imagine what inconvenience could accrue to the public by one or two thousand pounds a-year being in the hands of a Protestant bishop, any more than of a lay person.* The former, generally speaking, lives as piously and hospitably as the other; pays his debt as honestly, and spends as much of his revenue among his tenants: besides, if they be his immediate tenants, you may distinguish them at first sight by their habits and horses; or, if you go to their houses, by their comfortable way of living. But the misfortune is, that such immediate tenants, generally speaking, have others under them, and so a third and fourth in subordination, till it comes to the welder, (as they call him,) who sits at a rack-rent, and lives as miser-

* This part of the paragraph is to be applied to the period when the whole was written, which was in 1723, when several of Queen Anne's bishops were living.

ably as an Irish farmer upon a new lease from a lay landlord. But suppose a bishop happens to be avaricious, (as being composed of the same stuff with other men,) the consequence to the public is no worse than if he were a squire; for he leaves his fortune to his son, or near relation, who, if he be rich enough, will never think of entering into the church.

And as there can be no disadvantage to the public in a Protestant country, that a man should hold lands as a bishop, any more than if he were a temporal person; so it is of great advantage to the community, where a bishop lives as he ought to do. He is bound in conscience to reside in his diocese, and by a solemn promise to keep hospitality; his estate is spent in the kingdom, not remitted to England; he keeps the clergy to their duty, and is an example of virtue both to them and the people. Suppose him an ill man; yet his very character will withhold him from any great or open exorbitancies. But in fact it must be allowed, that some bishops of this kingdom, within twenty years past, have done very signal and lasting acts of public charity; great instances whereof are the late * and present † Primate, and the Lord Archbishop of Dublin ‡ that now is, who has left memorials of his bounty in many parts of his province. I might add the Bishop of Raphoe,§ and several others: not forgetting the late Dean of Down, Dr. Pratt, who bestowed one thousand pounds upon the university: which foundation, (that I may observe by the way,) if the bill proposed should pass, would be in the same circumstances with the bishops, nor ever able again to advance the stipends of the fellows and students,

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* Dr. Marsh. † Dr. Lindsay.
‡ Dr. King. § Dr. Forster.

as lately they found it necessary to do; the determinate sum appointed by the statutes for commons being not half sufficient, by the fall of money, to afford necessary sustenance. But the passing of such a bill must put an end to all ecclesiastical beneficence for the time to come; and whether this will be supplied by those who are to reap the benefit, better than it has been done by grandees of impropriate tithes, who received them upon the old church conditions of keeping hospitality, it will be easy to conjecture.

To allege, that passing such a bill would be a good encouragement to improve bishops' lands, is a great error. Is it not the general method of landlords to wait the expiration of a lease, and then cant their lands to the highest bidder? and what should hinder the same course to be taken in church leases, when the limitation is removed of paying half the real value to the bishop? In riding through the country, how few improvements do we see upon the estates of laymen, farther than about their own domains? To say the truth, it is a great misfortune, as well to the public as to the bishops themselves, that their lands are generally let to lords and great squires, who, in reason, were never designed to be tenants; and therefore may naturally murmur at the payment of rent, as a subserviency they were not born to. If the tenants to the church were honest farmers, they would pay their fines and rents with cheerfulness, improve their lands, and thank God they were to give but a moderate half value for what they held. I have heard a man of a thousand pounds a-year talk with great contempt of bishops' leases, as being on a worse foot than the rest of his estate; and he had certainly reason: my answer was, that such leases were originally intended only for the benefit of industrious husbandmen, who

would think it a great blessing to be provided for, instead of having their farms screwed up to the height, not eating one comfortable meal in a year, nor able to find shoes for their children.

I know not any advantage that can accrue by such a bill, except the preventing of perjury in jurymen, and false dealings in tenants; which is a remedy like that of giving my money to a highwayman, before he attempts to take it by force; and so I shall be sure to prevent the sin of robbery.

I had wrote thus far, and thought to have made an end; when a bookseller sent me a small pamphlet, entitled, *The Case of the Laity, with some Queries;* full of the strongest malice against the clergy, that I have anywhere met with since the reign of Toland, and others of that tribe. These kinds of advocates do infinite mischief to OUR GOOD CAUSE, by giving grounds to the unjust reproaches of TORIES and JACOBITES, who charge us with being enemies to the church. If I bear a hearty unfeigned loyalty to his Majesty King George, and the House of Hanover, not shaken in the least by the hardships we lie under, which never can be imputable to so gracious a prince; if I sincerely abjure the Pretender, and all Popish successors; if I bear a due veneration to the glorious memory of the late King William, who preserved these kingdoms from Popery and slavery, with the expense of his blood and hazard of his life; and lastly, if I am for a proper indulgence to all dissenters, I think nothing more can be reasonably demanded of me as a WHIG, and that my political catechism is full and complete. But whoever, under the shelter of that party denomination, and of many great professions of loyalty, would destroy, or undermine, or injure the church established, I utterly disown him, and think he ought to choose another name of distinction for

himself and his adherents. I came into the cause upon other principles, which, by the grace of God, I mean to preserve as long as I live. Shall we justify the accusations of our adversaries? *Hoc Ithacus velit.* The Tories and Jacobites will behold us with a malicious pleasure, determined upon the ruin of our friends. For is not the present set of bishops almost entirely of that number, as well as a great majority of the principal clergy? And a short time will reduce the whole by vacancies upon death.

An impartial reader, if he pleases to examine what I have already said, will easily answer the bold queries in the pamphlet mentioned: he will be convinced, that the reason still strongly exists, for which that limiting law was enacted. A reasonable man will wonder, where can be the insufferable grievances, that an ecclesiastical landlord should expect a moderate or a third part value in rent for his lands, when his title is at least as ancient and as legal as that of a layman: who is yet but seldom guilty of giving such beneficial bargains. Has the nation been thrown into confusion; and have many poor families been ruined by rack-rents paid for the lands of the church? does the nation cry out to have a law that must in time send their bishops a-begging? but God be thanked, the clamour of enemies to the church is not yet the cry, and I hope will never prove the voice, of the nation. The clergy, I conceive, will hardly allow that the people maintain them, any more than in the sense that all landlords whatsoever are maintained by the people. Such assertions as these, and the insinuations they carry along with them, proceed from principles which cannot be avowed by those who are for preserving the happy constitution in church and state. Whoever were the proposers of such queries, it might have

provoked a bold writer to retaliate, perhaps with more justice than prudence, by shewing at whose door the grievance lies, and that the bishops at least are not to answer for the poverty of tenants.

To gratify this great reformer, who enlarges the episcopal rent-roll almost one half, let me suppose that all the church-lands in the kingdom were thrown up to the laity; would the tenants in such a case sit easier in their rents than they do now? or would the money be equally spent in the kingdom? No; the farmer would be screwed up to the utmost penny by the agents and stewards of absentees, and the revenues employed in making a figure at London; to which city a full third part of the whole income of Ireland is annually returned, to answer that single article of maintenance for Irish landlords.

Another of his quarrels is against pluralities and non-residence. As to the former, it is a word of ill name, but not well understood. The clergy have been stripped of the greatest part of their revenues, the glebes being generally lost, the tithes in the hands of laymen, the churches demolished, and the country depopulated; in order to preserve a face of Christianity, it was necessary to unite small vicarages sufficient to make a tolerable maintenance for a minister. The profit of ten or a dozen of these unions seldom amounts to above eighty or an hundred pounds a-year. If there be a very few dignitaries whose preferments are perhaps more liable to this accusation, it is to be supposed, they may be favourites of the time: or persons of superior merit, for whom there has ever been some indulgence in all governments.

As to non-residence, I believe there is no Christian country upon earth, where the clergy have less to answer for upon that article. I am confident there are not ten clergymen in the kingdom, who, properly

speaking, can be termed non-residents: for surely we are not to reckon in that number those, who, for want of glebes, are forced to retire to the nearest neighbouring village for a cabin to put their heads in: the leading man of the parish, when he makes the greatest clamour, being least disposed to accommodate the minister with an acre of ground. And, indeed, considering the difficulties the clergy lie under upon this head, it has been frequent matter of wonder to me, how they are able to perform that part of their duty so well as they do.

There is a noble author,* who has lately addressed to the House of Commons an excellent discourse for the encouragement of agriculture; full of most useful hints, which I hope that honourable assembly will consider as they deserve. I am no stranger to his lordship; and, excepting in what relates to the church, there are few persons with whose opinions I am better pleased to agree; and am therefore grieved when I find him charging the inconveniences in the payment of tithes upon the clergy and their proctors. His lordship is above considering a very known and vulgar truth, that the meanest farmer has all manner of advantages against the most powerful clergyman, by whom it is impossible he can be wronged, although the minister were ever so ill-disposed; the whole system of teazing, perplexing, and defrauding, the proctor, or his master, being as well known to every ploughman as the reaping or sowing of his corn, and much more artfully practised. Besides, the leading man in the parish must have his tithes at his own rate, which is hardly ever above one quarter of the value. And I have heard it computed by many skilful observers, whose interest was not concerned, that the clergy

* Lord Molesworth.

did not receive, throughout the kingdom, one-half of what the laws have made their due.

As to his lordship's discontent against the Bishop Court, I shall not interpose farther than in venturing my private opinion, that the clergy would be very glad to recover their just dues, by a more short, decisive, and compulsive method, than such a cramped limited jurisdiction will allow.

His lordship is not the only person disposed to give the clergy the honour of being the sole encouragers of all new improvements. If hops, hemp, flax, and twenty things more, are to be planted, the clergy alone must reward the industrious farmer, by abatement of the tithe. What if the owner of nine parts in ten would please to abate proportionably in his rent for every acre thus improved? Would not a man just dropped from the clouds, upon a full hearing, judge the demand to be at least as reasonable?

I believe no man will dispute his lordship's title to his estate; nor will I the *jus divinum* of tithes, which he mentions with some emotion. I suppose the affirmative would be of little advantage to the clergy, for the same reason that a maxim in law has more weight in the world than an article of faith. And yet I think there may be such a thing as sacrilege; because it is frequently mentioned by Greek and Roman authors, as well as described in Holy Writ. This I am sure of, that his lordship would at any time excuse a parliament for not concerning itself in his properties, without his own consent.

The observations I have made upon his lordship's discourse, have not, I confess, been altogether proper to my subject: however, since he has been pleased therein to offer some proposals to the House of Commons with relation to the clergy, I hope he will excuse me for differing from him; which proceeds

from his own principle, the desire of defending liberty and property, that he has so strenuously and constantly maintained.

But the other writer openly declares for a law empowering the bishops to set fee-farms; and says, "Whoever intimates that they will deny their consent to such a reasonable law, which the whole nation cries for, are enemies to them and the church." Whether this be his real opinion, or only a strain of mirth and irony, the matter is not much. However, my sentiments are so directly contrary to his, that I think, whoever impartially reads and considers what I have written upon this argument, has either no regard for the church established under the hierarchy of bishops, or will never consent to any law that shall repeal or elude the limiting clause relating to the real half value contained in the act of parliament *decimo Caroli*, for the preservation of the inheritance, rights, and profits of lands belonging to the church and persons ecclesiastical; which was grounded upon reasons that do still, and must for ever, subsist.

October 21, 1723.

REASONS HUMBLY OFFERED

TO HIS GRACE

WILLIAM LORD ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN, &c.

THE HUMBLE REPRESENTATION OF THE CLERGY OF THE CITY OF DUBLIN.

Jan. 1724.

My Lord,

YOUR Grace having been pleased to communicate to us a certain brief, by letters patent, for the relief of one Charles M'Carthy, whose house in College-Green, Dublin, was burnt by an accidental fire; and having desired us to consider of the said brief, and give our opinions thereof to your Grace:

We, the clergy of the city of Dublin, in compliance with your Grace's desire, and with great acknowledgments for your paternal tenderness toward us, having maturely considered the said brief by letters patent, compared the several parts of it with what is enjoined us by the rubric, (which is confirmed by act of parliament,) and consulted persons skilled in the laws of the church; do, in the names of ourselves and of the rest of our brethren, the clergy of the

diocese of Dublin, most humbly represent to your Grace:

First, That, by this brief, your Grace is required and commanded to recommend and command all the parsons, vicars, &c., to advance so great an act of charity.

We shall not presume to determine how far your Grace may be commanded by the said brief, but we humbly conceive that the clergy of your diocese cannot, by any law now in being, be commanded by your Grace to advance the said act of charity, any otherwise than by reading the said brief in our several churches, as prescribed by the rubric.

Secondly, Whereas it is said in the said brief, "That the parsons, vicars, &c., upon the first Lord's day, or opportunity, after the receipt of the copy of the said brief, shall, deliberately and affectionately, publish and declare the tenor thereof to his Majesty's subjects, and earnestly persuade, exhort, and stir them up, to contribute freely and cheerfully toward the relief of the said sufferer:"

We do not comprehend what is meant by the word *opportunity*. We never do preach upon any day except the Lord's day, or some solemn days legally appointed; neither is it possible for the strongest constitution among us to obey this command, (which includes no less than a whole sermon,) upon any other opportunity than when our people are met together in the church; and to perform this work in every house, where the parishes are very populous, consisting sometimes here in town of nine hundred or one thousand houses, would take up the space of a year, although we should preach in two families every day; and almost as much time in the country, where the parishes are of large extent, the roads bad, and the people too poor to receive us and give charity at once.

But, if it be meant that these exhortations are commanded to be made in the church upon the Lord's day, we are humbly of opinion, that it is left to the discretion of the clergy to choose what subjects they think most proper to preach on, and at what times; and if they preach either false doctrines or seditious principles, they are liable to be punished.

It may possibly happen that the sufferer recommended may be a person not deserving the favour intended by the brief; in which case, no minister who knows the sufferer to be an undeserving person, can, with a safe conscience, deliberately and affectionately publish the brief, much less earnestly persuade, exhort, and stir up the people, to contribute freely and cheerfully toward the relief of such a sufferer.*

Thirdly, Whereas, in the said brief, the ministers and curates are required, "on the week-days next after the Lord's day when the brief was read, to go from house to house, with their church-wardens, to ask and receive from all persons the said charity." We cannot but observe here, that the said ministers are directly made collectors of the said charity, in conjunction with the church-wardens, which, however, we presume, was not intended, as being against all law and precedent; and therefore, we apprehend, there may be some inconsistency, which leaves us at a loss how to proceed: for, in the next paragraph, the ministers and curates are only required, where they conveniently can, to accompany the church-wardens, or procure some other of the chief inhabitants to do the same. And in a follow-

* This M'Carthy's house was burnt in the month of August, 1723; and the universal opinion of mankind was, that M'Carthy himself was the person who set fire to the house.

ing paragraph, the whole work seems left entirely to the church-wardens, who are required to use their utmost diligence to gather and collect the said charity, and to pay the same, in ten days after, to the parson, vicar, &c.

In answer to this, we do represent to your Grace our humble opinion, that neither we, nor our church-wardens, can be legally commanded or required to go from house to house to receive the said charity; because your Grace has informed us in your order, at your visitation, A.D. 1712, "That neither we nor our church-wardens are bound to make any collections for the poor, save in the church;" which also appears plainly by the rubric, that appoints both time and place, as your Grace has observed in your said order.

We do likewise assure your Grace, that it is not in our power to procure some of the chief inhabitants of our parishes to accompany the church-wardens from house to house in these collections; and we have reason to believe that such a proposal made to our chief inhabitants, (particularly in this city, where our chief inhabitants are often peers of the land,) would be received in a manner very little to our own satisfaction, or to the advantage of the said collections.

Fourthly, The brief does will, require, and command, the bishops, and all other dignitaries of the church, "That they make their contributions distinctly, to be returned in the several provinces to the several archbishops of the same."

Upon which, we take leave to observe, that the terms of expression here are of the strongest kind, and in a point that may subject the said dignitaries (for we shall say nothing of the bishops) to great inconveniences.

The said dignitaries are here willed, required, and

commanded, to make their contributions distinctly: by which it should seem that they are absolutely commanded to make contributions, (for the word *distinctly* is but a circumstance,) and may be understood not very agreeable to a voluntary, cheerful contribution. And therefore, if any bishop or dignitary should refuse to make his contribution, (perhaps for very good reasons,) he may be thought to incur the crime of disobedience to his Majesty, which all good subjects abhor, when such a command is according to law.

Most dignities of this kingdom consist only of parochial tithes, and the dignitaries are ministers of parishes. A doubt may therefore arise, whether the said dignitaries are willed, required, and commanded to make their contributions in both capacities, distinctly as dignitaries, and jointly as parsons or vicars.

Many dignities in this kingdom are the poorest kind of benefices; and it would seem hard to put poor dignitaries under the necessity either of making greater contributions than they can afford, or of exposing themselves to the censure of wanting charity, by making their contributions public.

Our Saviour commands us, in works of charity, to "let not our left hand know what our right hand doth;" which cannot well consist with our being willed, required, and commanded, by any earthly power, where no law is prescribed, to publish our charity to the world, if we have a mind to conceal it.

Fifthly, Whereas it is said, in the said brief, "That the parson, vicar, &c., of every parish, shall, in six days after the receipt of the said charity, return it to his respective chancellor," &c. This may be a great grievance, hazard, and expense, to the said parson, in remote and desolate parts of the country; where often an honest messenger (if such a one can be got) must be hired to travel forty or fifty miles going and

coming; which will probably cost more than the value of the contribution he carries with him. And this charge, if briefs should happen to be frequent, would be enough to undo many a poor clergyman in the kingdom.

Sixthly, We observe in the said brief, that the provost and fellows of the University, judges, officers of the court, and professors of laws, common and civil, are neither willed, required, nor commanded, to make their contributions; but that so good a work is only recommended to them. Whereas we conceive, that all his Majesty's subjects are equally obliged, with or without his Majesty's commands, to promote works of charity according to their power; and that the clergy, in their ecclesiastical capacity, are only liable to such commands as the rubric, or any other law, shall enjoin, being born to the same privileges of freedom with the rest of his Majesty's subjects.

We cannot but observe to your Grace, that, in the English act of the fourth year of Queen Anne, for the better collecting charity money on briefs by letters-patent, &c., the ministers are obliged only to read the briefs in their churches, without any particular exhortations; neither are they commanded to go from house to house with the church-wardens, nor to send the money collected to their respective chancellors, but to pay it to the undertaker, or agent of the sufferer. So that, we humbly hope, the clergy of this kingdom shall not, without any law in being, be put to greater hardships in this case than their brethren in England, where the legislature, intending to prevent the abuses in collecting charity money on briefs, did not think fit to put the clergy under any of those difficulties we now complain of in the present brief, by letters-patent, for the relief of Charles M'Carthy, aforesaid.

The collections upon the Lord's day are the principal support of our own numerous poor in our several parishes; and therefore every single brief, with the benefit of a full collection over the whole kingdom, must deprive several thousands of poor of their weekly maintenance, for the sake only of one person, who often becomes a sufferer by his own folly or negligence, and is sure to overvalue his losses double or treble; so that, if this precedent be followed, as it certainly will, if the present brief should succeed, we may probably have a new brief every week; and thus, for the advantage of fifty-two persons, whereof not one in ten is deserving, and for the interest of a dozen dexterous clerks and secretaries, the whole poor in the kingdom will be likely to starve.

We are credibly informed, that neither the officers of the Lord Primate, in preparing the report of his Grace's opinion, nor those of the great-seal, in passing the patent for briefs, will remit any of their fees, both which do amount to a considerable sum: and thus the good intentions of well-disposed people are, in a great measure, disappointed, a large part of their charity being anticipated and alienated by fees and gratuities.

Lastly, We cannot but represent to your Grace our great concern and grief, to see the pains and labour of our church-wardens so much increased, by the injunctions and commands put upon them in this brief, to the great disadvantage of the clergy and the people, as well as to their own trouble, damage, and loss of time; to which great additions have been already made, by laws appointing them to collect the taxes for the watch and the poor-house, which they bear with great unwillingness; and if they shall find themselves farther laden with such briefs as this of M'Carthy, it will prove so great a discouragement, that we shall never be able to provide honest and

sufficient persons for that weighty office of church-warden, so necessary to the laity as well as the clergy, in all things that relate to the order and regulation of parishes.

Upon all these considerations, we humbly hope that your Grace, of whose fatherly care, vigilance, and tenderness, we have had so many and great instances, will represent the case to his most excellent Majesty, or the chief governor in this kingdom, in such a manner, that we may be neither under the necessity of declining his majesty's commands in his letters patent, or of taking new and grievous burdens upon ourselves and our church-wardens, to which neither the rubric, or any other law in force, obliges us to submit.

ON

THE BILL

FOR THE

CLERGY RESIDING ON THEIR LIVINGS.

THE two following Tracts relate to a scheme brought into the Irish Parliament, for compelling the clergy to reside upon their livings, and obliging them for that purpose to build houses there, with some small aid from the first-fruits, to defray a part of the expense. It was also proposed to subdivide the larger livings into as many portions as the bishops should think fit, only leaving the original church, in each instance, £300 clear income. These bills passed through the House of Lords, and were keenly opposed by Swift, whose zeal for the church at large was not attended with peculiar respect for the existing bishops, and who conceived that the consequence of the proposed scheme would be, to impoverish and degrade the inferior clergy, besides laying them completely at the mercy of their spiritual superiors. The first of these tracts contains the substantial argument, which is more formally detailed in that which follows. There is in both, but especially in the latter, a tone of *aigreur*, intimating deep dissatisfaction with late ecclesiastical preferments, which may perhaps be traced as much to personal disappointment as to any better cause.

The bills were thrown out in the House of Commons.

THOSE gentlemen who have been promoted to bishoprics in this kingdom for several years past, are of two sorts: first, certain private clergymen from England, who, by the force of friends, industry, solicitation, or other means and merits to me unknown, have been raised to that character by the *mero motu* of the crown.

Of the other sort are some clergymen born in this kingdom, who have most distinguished themselves by their warmth against Popery, their great indulgence to Dissenters, and all true loyal Protestants; by their zeal for the house of Hanover, abhorrence of the Pretender, and an implicit readiness to fall into any measures that will make the government easy to those who represent his Majesty's person.

Some of the former kind are such as are said to have enjoyed tolerable preferments in England; and it is therefore much to their commendation that they have condescended to leave their native country, and come over hither to be bishops, merely to promote Christianity among us; and, therefore, in my opinion, both their lordships, and the many defenders they bring over, may justly claim the merit of missionaries sent to convert a nation from heresy and heathenism.

Before I proceed farther, it may be proper to relate some particulars wherein the circumstances of the English clergy differ from those of Ireland.

The districts of parishes throughout England continue much the same as they were before the Reformation; and most of the churches are of the gothic architecture, built some hundred years ago; but the tithes of great numbers of churches having been applied by the Pope's pretended authority to several abbeys, and even before the Reformation bestowed by that sacrilegious tyrant Henry VIII., on his

ravenous favourites, the maintenance of an incumbent in most parts of the kingdom is contemptibly small; and yet a vicar there of forty pounds a-year, can live with more comfort than one of three times the nominal value with us. For his forty pounds are duly paid him, because there is not one farmer in a hundred who is not worth five times the rent he pays to his landlord, and fifty times the sum demanded for the tithes; which, by the small compass of his parish, he can easily collect or compound for; and if his behaviour and understanding be supportable, he will probably receive presents, now and then, from his parishioners, and perhaps from the squire; who, although he may sometimes be apt to treat his parson a little superciliously, will probably be softened by a little humble demeanour. The vicar is likewise generally sure to find upon his admittance to his living, a convenient house and barn in repair, with a garden, with a field or two to graze a few cows, and one horse for himself and his wife. He has probably a market very near him, perhaps in his own village. No entertainment is expected by his visitor beyond a pot of ale and a piece of cheese. He has every Sunday the comfort of a full congregation of plain, cleanly people of both sexes, well to pass, and who speak his own language. The scene about him is fully cultivated, (I mean for the general,) and well inhabited. He dreads no thieves for anything but his apples, for the trade of universal stealing is not so epidemic there as with us. His wife is little better than Goody, in her birth, education, or dress; and as to himself, we must let his parentage alone. If he be the son of a farmer it is very sufficient, and his sister may very decently be chambermaid to the squire's wife. He goes about on working days in a grazier's coat, and will not scruple to assist his workmen in harvest time. He

is usually wary and thrifty, and often more able to provide for a numerous family than some of ours can do with a rectory called £300 a-year. His daughters shall go to service, or be sent apprentice to the sempstress of the next town; and his sons are put to honest trades. This is the usual course of an English country vicar, from twenty to sixty pounds a-year.

As to the clergy of our own kingdom, their livings are generally larger. Not originally, or by the bounty of princes, parliaments, or charitable endowments, for the same degradations (and as to glebes, a much greater) have been made here, but, by the destruction and desolation in the long wars between the invaders and the natives; during which time a great part of the bishops' lands, and almost all the glebes, were lost in the confusion. The first invaders had almost the whole kingdom divided among them. New invaders succeeded, and drove out their predecessors as native Irish. These were expelled by others who came after, and upon the same pretensions. Thus it went on for several hundred years, and in some degree even to our own memories. And thus it will probably go on, although not in a martial way, to the end of the world. For not only the purchasers of debentures forfeited in 1641, were all of English birth, but those after the Restoration, and many who came hither even since the Revolution, are looked upon as perfect Irish; directly contrary to the practice of all wise nations, and particularly of the Greeks and Romans, in establishing their colonies, by which name Ireland is very absurdly called.

Under these distractions the conquerors always seized what lands they could with little ceremony whether they belonged to the church or not: thus the glebes were almost universally exposed to the

first seizers, and could never be recovered, although the grants, with the particular denominations, are manifest, and still in being. The whole lands of the see of Waterford were wholly taken by one family; the like is reported of other bishoprics.

King James the First, who deserves more of the church of Ireland than all other princes put together, having the forfeitures of vast tracts of land in the northern parts, (I think commonly called the escheated counties,) having granted some hundred thousand acres of these lands to certain Scotch and English favourites, was prevailed on by some great prelates, to grant to some sees in the north, and to many parishes there, certain parcels of land for the augmentation of poor bishoprics, did likewise endow many parishes with glebes for the incumbents, whereof a good number escaped the depredations of 1641 and 1688. These lands, when they were granted by King James, consisted mostly of woody ground, wherewith those parts of this island were then overrun. This is well known, universally allowed, and by some in part remembered; the rest being, in some places, not stubbed out to this day. And the value of the lands was consequently very inconsiderable, till Scotch colonies came over in swarms upon great encouragement, to make them habitable; at least for such a race of strong-bodied people, who came hither from their own bleak barren highlands, as it were into a paradise; who soon were able to get straw for their bedding, instead of a bundle of heath spread on the ground, and sprinkled with water. Here, by degrees, they acquired some degree of politeness and civility, from such neighbouring Irish as were still left after Tyrone's last rebellion, and are since grown almost entire possessors of the north. Thus, at length, the woods being rooted up, the land was brought

in and tilled, and the glebes, which could not before yield twopence an acre, are equal to the best, sometimes affording the minister a good demesne, and some land to let.

These wars and desolations in their natural consequences, were likewise the cause of another effect, I mean that of uniting several parishes under one incumbent. For, as the lands were of little value by the want of inhabitants to cultivate them, and many of the churches levelled to the ground, particularly by the fanatic zeal of those rebellious saints who murdered their king, destroyed the church, and overthrew monarchy; (for all which there is a humiliation-day appointed by law, and soon approaching;) so, in order to give a tolerable maintenance to a minister, and the country being too poor, as well as devotion too low, to think of building new churches, it was found necessary to repair some one church which had least suffered, and join sometimes three or more, enough for a bare support to some clergyman, who knew not where to provide himself better. This was a case of absolute necessity, to prevent heathenism, as well as popery, from overrunning the nation. The consequence of these unions was very different, in different parts; for, in the north, by the Scotch settlement, their numbers daily increasing by new additions from their own country, and their prolific quality peculiar to northern people; and, lastly, by their universally feeding upon oats, (which grain, under its several preparations and denominations, is the only natural luxury of that hardy people,) the value of tithes increased so prodigiously, that at this day, I confess, several united parishes ought to be divided, taking in so great a compass, that it is almost impossible for the people to travel timely to their own parish church, or their little churches to contain half their number,

though the revenue would be sufficient to maintain two, or perhaps three, worthy clergymen with decency; provided the times mend, or that they were honestly dealt with, which I confess is seldom the case. I shall name only one, and it is the deanery of Derry; the revenue whereof, if the dean could get his dues, exceeding that of some bishoprics, both by the compass and fertility of the soil, the number as well as industry of the inhabitants, the conveniency of exporting their corn to Dublin and foreign parts; and, lastly, by the accidental discovery of marl in many places of the several parishes. Yet all this revenue is wholly founded upon corn, for I am told there is hardly an acre of glebe for the dean to plant and build on.

I am therefore of opinion, that a real undefalcated revenue of six hundred pounds a-year, is a sufficient income for a country dean in this kingdom; and since the rents consist wholly of tithes, two parishes, to the amount of that value, should be united, and the dean reside as minister in that of Down, and the remaining parishes be divided among worthy clergymen, to about £300 a-year to each. The deanery of Derry, which is a large city, might be left worth £800 a-year, and Raphoe according as it shall be thought proper. These three are the only opulent deaneries in the whole kingdom, and, as I am informed, consist all of tithes, which was an unhappy expedient in the church, occasioned by the sacrilegious robberies during the several times of confusion and war; insomuch that at this day there is hardly any remainder left of dean and chapter lands in Ireland, that delicious morsel swallowed so greedily in England, under the fanatic usurpations.

As to the present scheme of a bill for obliging the clergy to residence, now or lately in the privy council, I know no more of the particulars than

what has been told me by several clergymen of distinction; they say, that a petition in the name of them all has been presented to the Lord-Lieutenant and council, that they might be heard by their council against the bill, and that the petition was rejected, with some reasons why it was rejected; for the bishops are supposed to know best what is proper for the clergy. It seems the bill consists of two parts: first, a power in the bishops, with consent of the archbishop, and the patron, to take off from any parish, whatever it is worth, above £300 a-year; and this to be done without the incumbent's consent, which before was necessary in all divisions. The other part of the bill obliges all clergymen, from forty pounds a-year and upwards, to reside and build a house in his parish. But those of £40 are remitted till they shall receive £100 out of the revenue of first-fruits granted by her late majesty.

CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

TWO BILLS,

SENT DOWN FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF LORDS TO THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN IRELAND, RELATING TO THE CLERGY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1731.

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I HAVE often, for above a month past, desired some few clergymen, who are pleased to visit me, that they would procure an extract of two BILLS, brought into the council by some of the bishops, and both of them since passed in the House of Lords: but I could never obtain what I desired, whether by the forgetfulness or negligence of those whom I employed, or the difficulty of the thing itself. Therefore, if I shall happen to mistake in any fact of consequence, I desire my remarks upon it may pass for nothing; for my information is no better than what I received in words from several divines, who seemed to agree with each other. I have not the honour to be acquainted with any one

single prelate of the kingdom; and am a stranger to their characters, farther than as common fame reports them, which is not to be depended on; therefore I cannot be supposed to act upon a principle of resentment. I esteem their functions (if I may be allowed to say so without offence) as truly apostolical, and absolutely necessary to the perfection of a Christian church.

There are no qualities more incident to the frailty and corruption of human kind, than an indifference or insensibility for other men's sufferings, and a sudden forgetfulness of their own former humble state, when they rise in the world. These two dispositions have not, I think, anywhere so strongly exerted themselves, as in the order of bishops with regard to the inferior clergy; for which I can find no reasons, but such as naturally should seem to operate a quite contrary way. The maintenance of the clergy throughout the kingdom is precarious and uncertain, collected from a most miserable race of beggarly farmers; at whose mercy every minister lies to be defrauded. His office, as rector or vicar, if it be duly executed, is very laborious. As soon as he is promoted to a bishopric, the scene is entirely and happily changed; his revenues are large, and as surely paid as those of the king; his whole business is, once a-year, to receive the attendance, the submission, and the proxy-money of all his clergy, in whatever part of the diocese he shall please to think most convenient for himself. Neither is his personal presence necessary, for the business may be done by a vicar-general. The fatigue of ordination is just what the bishops please to make it; and as matters have been for some time, and may probably remain, the fewer ordinations the better. The rest of their visible office consists in the honour of attending parliaments and councils, and bestowing preferments

in their own gifts; in which last employment, and in their spiritual and temporal courts, the labour falls to their vicars-general, secretaries, proctors, apparitors, seneschals, and the like. Now, I say, in so quick a change, whereby their brethren in a few days are become their subjects, it would be reasonable at least to hope that the labour, confinement, and subjection, from which they have so lately escaped, like a bird out of the snare of the fowler, might a little incline them to remember the condition of those who were but last week their equals, probably their companions or their friends, and possibly as reasonable expectants. There is a known story of Colonel Tidcomb, who, while he continued a subaltern officer, was every day complaining against the pride, oppression, and hard treatment of colonels towards their officers; yet, in a very minute after he had received his commission for a regiment, walking with a friend on the Mall, he confessed that the spirit of colonelship was coming fast upon him: which spirit is said to have daily increased to the hour of his death.

It is true, the clergy of this kingdom, who are promoted to bishoprics, have always some great advantages; either that of rich deaneries, opulent and multiplied rectories and dignities, strong alliances by birth or marriage, fortified by a superlative degree of zeal and loyalty: but, however, they were all at first no more than young beginners; and before their great promotion were known by their plain Christian names among their old companions, the middling rate of clergymen; nor could therefore be strangers to their condition, or with any good grace forget it so soon, as it has too often happened.

I confess, I do not remember to have observed any body of men acting with so little concert, as our clergy have done, in a point where their opinions appeared to be unanimous: a point, wherein their

whole temporal support was concerned, as well as their power of serving God and his church in their spiritual functions. This has been imputed to their fear of disobliging, or hopes of farther favours upon compliance; because it was observed, that some who appeared at first with the greatest zeal, thought fit suddenly to absent themselves from the usual meetings: yet we know what expert solicitors the Quakers, the Dissenters, and even the Papists, have sometimes found, to drive a point of advantage, or prevent an impending evil.

I have not seen any extract from the two bills introduced by the bishops into the privy council; where the clergy, upon some failure in favour, or through the timorousness of many among their brethren, were refused to be heard by the council. It seems these bills were both returned, agreed to by the King and council in England, and the House of Lords has with great expedition passed them both; and it is said they are immediately to be sent down to the Commons for their consent.

The particulars, as they have been imperfectly reported to me, are as follow:

By one of the bills, the bishops have power to oblige the country clergy to build a mansion-house, upon whatever part of their glebes their lordships shall command: and if the living be above £50 a-year, the minister is bound to build, after three years, a house that shall cost one year and a half's rent of his income. For instance, if a clergyman with a wife and seven children gets a living of £55 per annum, he must, after three years, build a house that shall cost £77, 10*s*., and must support his family, during the time the bishop shall appoint for the building of it, with the remainder. But if the living be under £50 a-year, the minister shall be allowed £100 out of the first-fruits.

But there is said to be one circumstance a little extraordinary; that if there be a single spot in the glebe more barren, more marshy, more exposed to the winds, more distant from the church, or skeleton of a church, or from any conveniency of building; the rector or vicar may be obliged, by the caprice or pique of the bishop, to build, under pain of sequestration, (an office which ever falls into the most knavish hands,) upon whatever point his lordship shall command; although the farmers have not paid one quarter of his due.

I believe, under the present distresses of the kingdom, (which inevitably without a miracle must increase for ever,) there are not ten country clergymen in Ireland reputed to possess a parish of £100 per annum, who for some years past have actually received £60, and that with the utmost difficulty and vexation. I am therefore at a loss what kind of valuators the bishops will make use of; and whether the starving vicar shall be forced to build his house with the money he never received.

The other bill, which passed in two days after the former, is said to concern the division of parishes into as many parcels as the bishop shall think fit, only leaving £300 a-year to the mother church; which £300, by another act passed some years ago, they can divide likewise, and crumble as low as their will and pleasure will dispose them. So that, instead of six hundred clergymen, which, I think, is the usual computation, we may have, in a small compass of years, almost as many thousands to live with decency and comfort, provide for their children, be charitable to the poor, and maintain hospitality.

But it is very reasonable to hope, and heartily to be wished by all those who have the least regard to our holy religion, as hitherto established, or to a learned, pious, diligent, conversible clergyman, or

even to common humanity, that the honourable House of Commons will, in their great wisdom, justice, and tenderness to innocent men, consider these bills in another light. It is said they well know this kingdom not to be so overstocked with neighbouring gentry, but a discreet learned clergyman, with a competency fit for one of his education, may be an entertaining, a useful, and sometimes a necessary companion. That, although such a clergyman may not be able constantly to find beef and wine for his own family, yet he may be allowed sometimes to afford both to a neighbour without distressing himself; and the rather, because he may expect at least as good a return. It will probably be considered, that in many desolate parts, there may not be always a sufficient number of persons considerable enough to be trusted with commissions of the peace, which several of the clergy now supply, much better than a little, hedge, contemptible, illiterate vicar, from twenty to fifty pounds a-year, the son of a weaver, pedlar, tailor, or miller, can be presumed to do.

The landlords and farmers, by this scheme, can find no profit, but will certainly be losers. For instance, if the large northern livings be split into a dozen parishes or more, it will be very necessary for the little threadbare gownman, with his wife, his proctor, and every child who can crawl, to watch the fields at harvest time, for fear of losing a single sheaf, which he could not afford under peril of a day's starving: for, according to the Scotch proverb, a hungry louse bites sore. This would, of necessity, breed an infinite number of wrangles and litigious suits in the spiritual courts; and put the wretched pastor at perpetual variance with his whole parish. But, as they have hitherto stood, a clergyman established in a competent living, is not under the

necessity of being so sharp, vigilant, and exacting. On the contrary, it is well known and allowed, that the clergy round the kingdom think themselves well treated, if they lose only one single third of their legal demands.

The honourable House may perhaps be inclined to conceive, that my lords the bishops enjoy as ample a power, both spiritual and temporal, as will fully suffice to answer every branch of their office; that they want no laws to regulate the conduct of those clergymen over whom they preside; that if non-residence be a grievance, it is the patron's fault, who makes not a better choice, or caused the plurality. That if the general impartial character of persons chosen into the church, had been more regarded, and the motive of party, alliance, kindred, flatterers, ill judgment, or personal favour, regarded less, there would be fewer complaints of non-residence, want of care, blameable behaviour, or any other part of misconduct; not to mention ignorance and stupidity.

I could name certain gentlemen of the gown, whose awkward, spruce, prim, sneering, and smirking countenances, the very tone of their voices, and an ungainly strut in their walk, without one single talent for any one office, have contrived to get good preferment, by the mere force of flattery and cringing: for which two virtues (the only two virtues they pretend to) they were, however, utterly unqualified: and whom, if I were in power, although they were my nephews, or had married my nieces, I could never, in point of good conscience or honour, have recommended to a curacy in Connaught.

The honourable House of Commons may likewise perhaps consider, that the gentry of this kingdom differ from all others upon earth, being less capable of employments in their own country, than any

other who come from abroad; and that most of them have little expectation of providing for their younger children, otherwise than by the church; in which there might be some hopes of getting a tolerable maintenance. For, after the patrons should have settled their sons, their nephews, their nieces, their dependants, and their followers invited over from the other side, there would still remain an overplus of smaller church preferments, to be given to such clergy of the nation who shall have their quantum of whatever merit may be then in fashion. But by these bills, they will be all as absolutely excluded as if they had passed under the denomination of Tories; unless they can be contented at the utmost with £50 a-year; which by the difficulties of collecting tithes in Ireland, and the daily increasing miseries of the people, will hardly rise to half that sum.

It is observed, that the divines sent over hither to govern this church, have not seemed to consider the difference between both kingdoms, with respect to the inferior clergy. As to themselves, indeed, they find a large revenue in lands, let at one quarter value, which consequently must be paid while there is a penny left among us; and the public distress so little affects their interests, that their fines are now higher than ever: they content themselves to suppose, that whatever a parish is said to be worth, comes all into the parson's pocket.

The poverty of great numbers among the clergy of England, has been the continual complaint of all men who wish well to the church, and many schemes have been thought on to redress it; yet an English vicar of £40 a-year, lives much more comfortably than one of double the value in Ireland. His farmers, generally speaking, are able and willing to pay him his full dues: he has a decent church of

ancient standing, filled every Lord's day with a large congregation of plain people, well clad, and behaving themselves as if they believed in God and Christ. He has a house and barn in repair, a field or two to graze his cows, with a garden and orchard. No guest expects more from him than a pot of ale; he lives like an honest, plain farmer, as his wife is dressed but little better than Goody. He is sometimes graciously invited by the squire, where he sits at an humble distance: if he gets the love of his people, they often make him little useful presents: he is happy by being born to no higher expectation; for he is usually the son of some ordinary tradesman, or middling farmer. His learning is much of a size with his birth and education; no more of either than what a poor hungry servitor can be expected to bring with him from his college. It would be tedious to shew the reverse of all this, in our distant poorer parishes through most parts of Ireland, wherein every reader may make the comparison.

Lastly, the honourable House of Commons may consider, whether the scheme of multiplying beggarly clergymen through the whole kingdom, who must all have votes for choosing parliament men, (provided they can prove their freeholds to be worth 40*s.* per annum *ultra reprisas*,) may not, by their numbers, have great influence upon elections; being entirely under the dependence of their bishops. For, by a moderate computation, after all the divisions and subdivisions of parishes, that my lords the bishops have power to make by their new laws, there will, as soon as the present set of clergy goes off, be raised an army of ecclesiastical militants, able enough for any kind of service, except that of the altar.

I am, indeed, in some concern about a fund for building a thousand or two churches, wherein these probationers may read their wall lectures; and begin

to doubt they must be contented with barns; which barns will be one great advancing step towards an accommodation with our true Protestant brethren, the Dissenters.

The scheme of encouraging clergymen to build houses, by dividing a living of £500 a-year into ten parts, is a contrivance, the meaning whereof has got on the wrong side of my comprehension; unless it may be argued, that bishops build no houses because they are so rich; and therefore the inferior clergy will certainly build, if you reduce them to beggary. But I knew a very rich man of quality in England, who could never be persuaded to keep a servant out of livery; because such servants would be expensive, and apt, in time, to look like gentlemen; whereas the others were ready to submit to the basest offices, and at a cheaper pennyworth might increase his retinue.

I hear, it is the opinion of many wise men, that before these bills pass both Houses, they should be sent back to England, with the following clauses inserted:

First, that whereas there may be about a dozen double bishoprics in Ireland, those bishoprics should be split, and given to different persons: and those of a single denomination be also divided into two, three, or four parts, as occasion shall require; otherwise there may be a question started, whether twenty-two prelates can effectually extend their paternal care, and unlimited power, for the protection and correction of so great a number of spiritual subjects. But this proposal will meet with such furious objections, that I shall not insist upon it: for I well remember to have read, what a terrible fright the frogs were in, upon a report that the sun was going to marry.

Another clause should be, that none of these

twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty pounders, may be suffered to marry, under the penalty of immediate deprivation; their marriages declared null, and their children bastards: for some desponding people take the kingdom to be in no condition of encouraging so numerous a breed of beggars.

A third clause will be necessary, that these humble gentry should be absolutely disqualified from giving votes in elections for parliament men.

Others add a fourth; which is, a clause of indulgence, that these reduced divines may be permitted to follow any lawful ways of living, which will not call them too often or too far from their spiritual offices; for, unless I misapprehend, they are supposed to have episcopal ordination. For example; they may be lappers of linen, bailiffs of the manor; they may let blood, or apply plasters, for three miles round; they may get a dispensation to hold the clerkship and sextonship of their own parish *in commendam*. Their wives and daughters may make shirts for the neighbourhood; or, if a barrack be near, for the soldiers: in linen countries they may card and spin, and keep a few looms in the house: they may let lodgings, and sell a pot of ale without doors, but not at home, unless to sober company, and at regular hours. It is by some thought a little hard, that in an affair of the last consequence to the very being of the clergy in the points of liberty and property, as well as in their abilities to perform their duty, this whole reverend body, who are the established instructors of the nation in Christianity and moral virtues, and are the only persons concerned, should be the sole persons not consulted. Let any scholar shew the like precedent in Christendom, for twelve hundred years past. An act of parliament for settling or selling an estate in a private family is never passed until all parties give

consent. But in the present case, the whole body of the clergy is, as themselves apprehend, determined to utter ruin, without one expecting or asking their opinion; and this by a scheme contrived only by one part of the convocation, while the other part, which has been chosen in the usual forms, wants only the regal permission to assemble, and consult about the affairs of the church, as their predecessors have always done in former ages; where it is presumed, the lower house has a power of proposing canons, and a negative voice, as well as the upper. And God forbid (say these objectors) that there should be a real separate interest between the bishops and clergy, any more than there is between a man and his wife, a king and his people, or Christ and his church.

It seems there is a provision in the bill, that no parish shall be cut into scraps without the consent of several persons, who can be no sufferers in the matter; but I cannot find that the clergy lay much weight on this caution; because they argue, that the very persons from whom these bills took their rise, will have the greatest share in the decision.

I do not by any means conceive the crying sin of the clergy in this kingdom to be that of non-residence. I am sure it is many degrees less so here than in England, unless the possession of pluralities may pass under that name; and if this be a fault, it is well known to whom it must be imputed; I believe, upon a fair inquiry, (and I hear an inquiry is to be made,) they will appear to be most pardonably few; especially considering how many parishes have not an inch of glebe, and how difficult it is upon any reasonable terms to find a place of habitation. And therefore, God knows whether my lords the bishops will be soon able to convince the clergy, or those who have any regard for that venerable

body, that the chief motive in their lordships' minds, by procuring these bills, was to prevent the sin of non-residence; while the universal opinion of almost every clergyman in the kingdom, without distinction of party, taking in even those who are not likely to be sufferers, stands directly against them.

If some livings in the north may be justly thought too large a compass of land, which makes it inconvenient for the remotest inhabitants to attend the service of the church, which, in some instances, may be true, no reasonable clergyman would oppose a proper remedy by particular acts of parliament.

Thus, for instance, the deanery of Down, a country deanery I think without a cathedral, depending wholly upon a union of parishes joined together in a time when the land lay waste and thinly inhabited, since those circumstances are so prodigiously changed for the better, may properly be lessened, leaving a decent competency to the dean, and placing rectories in the remaining churches which are now served only by stipendiary curates.

The case may be probably the same in other parts: and such a proceeding, discreetly managed, would be truly for the good of the church.

For it is to be observed, that the dean and chapter lands, which, in England, were all seized under the fanatic usurpation, are things unknown in Ireland, having been long ravished from the church by a succession of confusions, and tithes applied in their stead to support that ecclesiastical dignity.

The late Archbishop of Dublin* had a very different way of encouraging the clergy of his diocese to residence: when a lease had run out seven years or more, he stipulated with the tenant to resign up

* The Right Rev. Dr. William King.

twenty or thirty acres to the minister of the parish where it lay convenient, without lessening his former rent, and with no great abatement of the fine; and this he did in the parts near Dublin, where land is at the highest rates, leaving a small chiefry for the minister to pay, hardly a sixth part of the value. I doubt not, that almost every bishop in the kingdom may do the same generous act, with less damage to their sees than his late Grace of Dublin; much of whose lands were out in fee-farms, or leases for lives: and I am sorry that the good example of such a prelate has not been followed.

But a great majority of the clergy's friends cannot hitherto reconcile themselves to this project; which they call a levelling principle, that must inevitably root out the seeds of all honest emulation, the legal parent of the greatest virtue and most generous actions among men; but which, in the general opinion, (for I do not pretend to offer my own,) will never more have room to exert itself in the breast of any clergyman whom this kingdom shall produce.

But whether the consequences of these bills may, by the virtues and frailties of future bishops, sent over hither to rule the church, terminate in good or evil, I shall not presume to determine, since God can work the former out of the latter. However, one thing I can venture to assert, that from the earliest ages of Christianity, to the minute I am now writing, there never was a precedent of such a proceeding; much less was it to be feared, hoped, or apprehended, from such hands in any Christian country; and so it may pass for more than a phœnix; because it has arisen without any assistance from the ashes of its sire.

The appearance of so many dissenters at the hearing of this cause, is what, I am told, has not been charged to the account of their prudence or

moderation; because that action has been censured as a mark of triumph and insult before the victory is complete: since neither of these bills has yet passed the House of Commons, and some are pleased to think it not impossible that they may be rejected. Neither do I hear, that there is an enacting clause in either of the bills, to apply any part of the divided or subdivided tithes toward increasing the stipends of the sectaries.—So that these gentlemen seem to be gratified like him, who, after having been kicked downstairs, took comfort when he saw his friend kicked down after him.

I have heard many more objections against several particulars of both these bills; but they are of a high nature, and carry such dreadful inuendos, that I dare not mention them; resolving to give no offence, because I will know how obnoxious I have long been (although I conceive without any fault of my own) to the zeal and principles of those who place all difference in opinion concerning public matters to the score of disaffection; whereof I am at least as innocent as the loudest of mv detractors.

DUBLIN, *Feb.* 24, 1731–2.

SOME REASONS

AGAINST

THE BILL FOR SETTLING THE TITHE

OF

HEMP, FLAX, &c., BY A MODUS.*

THE clergy did little expect to have any cause of complaint against the present House of Commons; who, in the last session, were pleased to throw out a bill† sent them from the Lords, which that reverend body apprehended would be very injurious

* In 1733, a bill was presented in the Irish House of Commons for encouraging the growth of flax, by which (in imitation of a similar regulation in England) it was provided, that the tithe upon that production should be commuted for a certain *modus*, or composition in money. As flax is the staple commodity of Ireland, the loss which the clergy of that kingdom must have sustained, by the proposed commutation, especially in the course of years, must have been very great. Accordingly, a petition was presented, subscribed by our author, Dr. John Stewart, Daniel Jackson, John Grattan, and others, on behalf of the clergy of Ireland, praying to be heard by counsel against the bill. Not satisfied with this interference, the Dean arranged his arguments against the proposed plan of a *modus*, in the shape of the following pamphlet; nor did his usual weapon, satire, remain sheathed upon the occasion. For this bill, with the resistance made to the tithe of pasturage, called *agistment*, occasioned his bitterest and last poetical diatribe, entitled *The Legion Club*.

The opposition to the bill proved so effectual, that it was dropped.

† For the bishops to divide livings. See the preceding Tracts.

to them, if it passed into a law ; and who in the present session defeated the arts and endeavours of schismatics to repeal the sacramental test.

For although it has been allowed on all hands, that the former of those bills might, by its necessary consequences, be very displeasing to the lay gentlemen of the kingdom, for many reasons purely secular ; and that this last attempt for repealing the test did much more affect at present the temporal interest than the spiritual ; yet the whole body of the lower clergy have, upon both these occasions, expressed equal gratitude to that honourable House for their justice and steadiness, as if the clergy alone were to receive the benefit.

It must needs be therefore a great addition to the clergy s grief, that such an assembly as the present House of Commons, should now with an expedition more than usual, agree to a bill for encouraging the linen manufacture with a clause whereby the church is to lose two parts in three of the legal tithe in flax and hemp.

Some reasons why the clergy think such a law will be a great hardship upon them, are, I conceive, those that follow. I shall venture to enumerate them, with all deference due to that honourable assembly.

First, the clergy suppose that they have not, by any fault or demerit, incurred the displeasure of the nation's representatives : neither can the declared loyalty of the present set, from the highest prelate to the lowest vicar, be in the least disputed : because there are hardly ten clergymen through the whole kingdom, for more than nineteen years past, who have not been either preferred entirely upon account of their declared affection to the Hanover line, or higher promoted as the due reward of the same merit.

There is not a landlord in the whole kingdom

residing some part of the year at his country-seat, who is not in his own conscience fully convinced that the tithes of his minister have gradually sunk for some years past one-third, or at least one-fourth, of their former value, exclusive of all nonsolvencies.

The payment of tithes in this kingdom is subject to so many frauds, brangles, and other difficulties, not only from Papists and Dissenters, but even from those who profess themselves Protestants, that by the expense, the trouble and vexation, of collecting and bargaining for them, they are, of all other rents, the most precarious, uncertain, and ill paid.

The landlords in most parishes expect, as a compliment, that they shall pay little more than half the value of the tithes for the lands they hold in their own hands; which often consist of large domains; and it is the minister's interest to make them easy upon that article, when he considers what influence those gentlemen have upon their tenants.

The clergy cannot but think it extremely severe, that in a bill for encouraging the linen manufacture, they alone must be the sufferers, who can least afford it. If, as I am told, there be a tax of three thousand pounds a-year paid by the public for a further encouragement to the said manufacture, are not the clergy equal sharers in the charge with the rest of their fellow subjects? What satisfactory reason can be therefore given, why they alone should bear the whole additional weight, unless it will be alleged that their property is not upon an equal foot with the properties of other men? They acquire their own small pittance, by at least as honest means as their neighbours, the landlords, possess their estates; and have been always supposed, except in rebellious or fanatical times, to have as good a title: for no families now in being can shew a more ancient. Indeed, if it be true that some persons (I hope they were not many)

were seen to laugh when the rights of the clergy were mentioned; in this case, an opinion may possibly be soon advanced, that they have no rights at all. And this is likely enough to gain ground in proportion as the contempt of all religion shall increase, which is already in a very forward way.

It is said, there will be also added to this bill a clause for diminishing the tithe of hops, in order to cultivate that useful plant among us: and here likewise the load is to lie entirely on the shoulders of the clergy, while the landlords reap all the benefit. It will not be easy to foresee where such proceedings are likely to stop; or whether by the same authority, in civil times, a parliament may not as justly challenge the same power in reducing all things titheable, not below the tenth part of the product (which is, and ever will be, the clergy's equitable right,) but from a tenth-part to a sixtieth or eightieth, and from thence to nothing.

I have heard it granted by skilful persons, that the practice of taxing the clergy by parliament, without their own consent, is a new thing, not much above the date of seventy years: before which period, in times of peace, they always taxed themselves. But things are extremely altered at present: it is not now sufficient to tax them in common with their fellow subjects, without imposing an additional tax upon them, from which, or from anything equivalent, all their fellow subjects are exempt; and this in a country professing Christianity.

The greatest part of the clergy throughout this kingdom, have been stripped of their glebes, by the confusion of times, by violence, fraud, oppression, and other unlawful means; all which glebes are now in the hands of the laity. So that they now are generally forced to lie at the mercy of landlords, for a small piece of ground in their parishes, at a most

exorbitant rent, and usually for a short term of years, whereon to build a house, and enable them to reside. Yet, in spite of these disadvantages, I am a witness, that they are generally more constant residents than their brethren in England; where the meanest vicar has a convenient dwelling, with a barn, a garden, and a field or two for his cattle; besides the certainty of his little income from honest farmers, able and willing, not only to pay him his dues, but likewise to make him presents, according to their ability, for his better support. In all which circumstances the clergy of Ireland meet with a treatment directly contrary.

It is hoped the honourable House will consider that it is impossible for the most ill-minded, avaricious, or cunning clergyman, to do the least injustice to the meanest cottager in his parish, in any bargain for tithes or other ecclesiastical dues. He can at the utmost only demand to have his tithes fairly laid out; and does not once in an hundred times obtain his demand. But every tenant, from the poorest cottager to the most substantial farmer, can, and generally does, impose upon the minister, by fraud, by theft, by lies, by perjuries, by insolence, and sometimes by force; notwithstanding the utmost vigilance and skill of himself and his proctor; insomuch, that it is allowed, that the clergy in general receive little more than one-half of their legal dues; not including the charges they are at in collecting or bargaining for them.

The land rents of Ireland are computed to about two millions, whereof one tenth amounts to two hundred thousand pounds. The beneficed clergymen, excluding those of this city, are not reckoned to be above five hundred; by which computation they should each of them possess two hundred pounds a-year, if those tithes were equally divided, although in well-cultivated corn countries it ought

to be more; whereas they hardly receive one-half of that sum, with great defalcations, and in very bad payments. There are, indeed, a few glebes in the north pretty considerable; but if these, and all the rest, were in like manner equally divided, they would not add five pounds a-year to every clergyman. Therefore, whether the condition of the clergy in general among us be justly liable to envy, or able to bear a heavy burden, which neither the nobility, nor gentry, nor tradesmen, nor farmers, will touch with one of their fingers; this, I say, is submitted to the honourable House.

One terrible circumstance in this bill is, that of turning the tithe of flax and hemp into what the lawyers call a *modus*, or a certain sum in lieu of a tenth part of the product. And by this practice of claiming a *modus* in many parishes by ancient custom, the clergy in both kingdoms have been almost incredible sufferers. Thus, in the present case, the tithe of a tolerable acre of flax, which by a medium is worth twelve shillings, is by the present bill reduced to four shillings. Neither is this the worst part in a *modus;* every determinate sum must in process of time sink from a fourth to a four-and-twentieth part, or a great deal lower, by that necessary fall attending the value of money; which is now at least nine-tenths lower all over Europe, than it was four hundred years ago, by a gradual decline; and even a third part at least, within our own memories, in purchasing almost everything required for the necessities or conveniencies of life; as any gentleman can attest who has kept house for twenty years past. And this will equally affect poor countries as well as rich. For, although I look upon it as an impossibility that this kingdom should ever thrive under its present disadvantages, which, without a miracle,

must still increase; yet, when the whole cash of the nation shall sink to fifty thousand pounds, we must, in all our traffic abroad, either of import or export, go by the general rate at which money is valued in those countries, that enjoy the common privileges of humankind. For this reason no corporation (if the clergy may presume to call themselves one) should by any means grant away their properties in perpetuity, upon any consideration whatsoever, which is a rock that many corporations have split upon, to their great impoverishment, and sometimes to their utter undoing: because they are supposed to subsist for ever, and because no determination of money is of any certain perpetual intrinsic value. This is known enough in England, where estates let for ever, some hundred years ago, by several ancient noble families, do not at this present pay their posterity a twentieth part of what they are now worth at an easy rate.

A tax affecting one part of a nation, which already bears its full share in all parliamentary impositions, cannot possibly be just, except it be inflicted as a punishment upon that body of men which is taxed, for some great demerit or danger to the public apprehended from those upon whom it is laid; thus the Papists and Nonjurors have been doubly taxed for refusing to give proper securities to the government, which cannot be objected against the clergy. And therefore, if this bill should pass, I think it ought to be with a preface, shewing wherein they have offended, and for what disaffection, or other crime, they are punished.

If an additional excise upon ale, or a duty upon flesh and bread, were to be enacted, neither the victualler, butcher, or baker, would bear any more of the charge than for what themselves consumed, but it would be an equal general tax through the

whole kingdom: whereas, by this bill, the clergy alone are avowedly condemned to be deprived of their ancient, inherent, undisputed rights, in order to encourage a manufacture, by which all the rest of the kingdom are supposed to be gainers.

This bill is directly against *Magna Charta;* whereof the first clause is, for confirming the inviolable rights of holy church; as well as contrary to the oath taken by all our kings at their coronation, where they swear to defend and protect the church in all its rights.

A tax laid upon employments is a very different thing. The possessors of civil and military employments are no corporation; neither are they any part of our constitution; their salaries, pay, and perquisites, are all changeable at the pleasure of the prince who bestows them, although the army be paid from funds raised and appropriated by the legislature. But the clergy, as they have little reason to expect, so they desire no more, than their ancient legal dues, (only indeed with the removal of many grievous impediments in the collection of them,) which, it is to be feared, they must wait for until more favourable times. It is well known that they have already, of their own accord, shewn great indulgence to their people upon this very article of flax, seldom taking above a fourth part of their tithe for small parcels, and oftentimes nothing at all from new beginners, waiting with patience until the farmers were able, and until greater quantities of land were employed in that part of husbandry; never suspecting that their good intentions should be perverted, in so singular a manner, to their detriment, by that very assembly, which, during the time that convocations, (which are an original part of our constitution ever since Christianity became national among us,) are thought fit to be suspended, God knows for what reason, or

from what provocations: I say, from that very assembly, who, during the intervals of convocations, should rather be supposed to be guardians of the rights and properties of the clergy, than to make the least attempt upon either.

I have not heard, upon inquiry, that any of those gentlemen, who among us without doors are called the court party, discover the least zeal in this affair. If they had thoughts to interpose, it might be conceived they would shew their displeasure against this bill, which must very much lessen the value of the King's patronage upon promotion to vacant sees, in the disposal of deaneries, and other considerable preferments in the church, which are in the donation of the crown, whereby the viceroys will have fewer good preferments to bestow on their dependants, as well as upon the kindred of members, who may have a sufficient stock of that sort of merit, whatever it may be, which may in future times most prevail.

The dissenters, by not succeeding in their endeavours to procure a repeal of the test, have lost nothing, but continue in full enjoyment of their toleration, while the clergy, without giving the least offence, are, by this bill, deprived of a considerable branch of their ancient legal rights, whereby the schismatical party will have the pleasure of gratifying their revenge—*hoc Graii voluere.*

The farmer will find no relief by this *modus*, because, when his present lease shall expire, his landlord will infallibly raise the rent in an equal proportion, upon every part of land where flax is sown, and have so much a better security for payment at the expense of the clergy.

If we judge by things past, it little avails that this bill is to be limited to a certain time, of ten, twenty, or thirty years. For no landlord will ever consent that a law shall expire, by which he finds himself a

gainer; and of this there are many examples, as well in England as in this kingdom.

The great end of this bill is, by proper encouragement, to extend the linen manufacture into those counties where it has hitherto been little cultivated: but this encouragement of lessening the tithe of flax and hemp, is one of such a kind as, it is to be feared, will have a directly contrary effect. Because, if I am rightly informed, no set of men has, for their number and fortunes, been more industrious and successful than the clergy, in introducing that manufacture into places which were unacquainted with it; by persuading their people to sow flax and hemp, by procuring seed for them, and by having them instructed in the management thereof; and this they did, not without reasonable hopes of increasing the value of their parishes after some time, as well as of promoting the benefit of the public. But if this *modus* should take place, the clergy will be so far from gaining, that they will become losers, by their extraordinary care, by having their best arable lands turned to flax and hemp, which are reckoned great impoverishers of land: they cannot therefore be blamed, if they should shew as much zeal to prevent its being introduced or improved in their parishes, as they hitherto have shewed in the introducing and improving of it. This, I am told, some of them have already declared; at least so far as to resolve not to give themselves any more trouble than other men about promoting a manufacture, by the success of which they only, of all men, are to be sufferers. Perhaps the giving even a farther encouragement than the law does, as it now stands, to a set of men, who might, on many accounts, be so useful to this purpose, would be no bad method of having the great end of the bill more effectually answered; but this is what they are far from desiring: all they

petition for, is no more than to continue on the same footing with the rest of their fellow subjects.

If this *modus* of paying by the acre be to pass into a law, it were to be wished that the same law would not only appoint one or more sworn surveyors in each parish, to measure the lands on which flax and hemp are sown, but also settle the price of surveying, and determine whether the incumbent or farmer is to pay for each annual survey. Without something of this kind, there must constantly be disputes between them, and the neighbouring justices of peace must be teazed as often as those disputes happen.

I had written thus far, when a paper was sent to me with several reasons against the bill, some whereof, although they have been already touched, are put in a better light, and the rest did not occur to me. I shall deliver them in the author's own words.

I. That tithes are the patrimony of the church; and, if not of divine original, yet at least of great antiquity.

II. That all purchases and leases of titheable lands, for many centuries past, have been made and taken, subject to the demand of tithes, and those lands sold and taken just so much the cheaper on that account.

III. That if any lands are exempted from tithes, or the legal demands of such tithes lessened by act of parliament, so much value is taken from the proprietor of the tithes, and vested in the proprietor of the lands, or his head tenants.

IV. That no innocent unoffending person can be so deprived of his property, without the greatest violation of common justice.

V. That to do this upon a prospect of encouraging the linen, or any other manufacture, is acting

upon a very mistaken and unjust supposition, inasmuch as the price of the lands, so occupied, will be no way lessened to the farmer by such a law.

VI. That the clergy are content cheerfully to bear (as they now do) any burden in common with their fellow-subjects, either for the support of his Majesty's government, or the encouragement of the trade of the nation; but think it very hard that they should be singled out to pay heavier taxes than others, at a time when, by the decrease of the value of their parishes, they are less able to bear them.

VII. That the legislature has heretofore distinguished the clergy by exemptions, and not by additional loads; and the present clergy of the kingdom hope they have not deserved worse of the legislature than their predecessors.

VIII. That, by the original constitution of these kingdoms, the clergy had the sole right of taxing themselves, and were in possession of that right as low as the Restoration; and if that right be now devolved upon the commons, by the cession of the clergy, the commons can be considered, in this case, in no other light than as the guardians of the clergy.

IX. That, besides those tithes always in the possession of the clergy, there are some portions of tithes lately come into their possession by purchase; that, if this clause should take place, they would not be allowed the benefit of these purchases, upon an equal footing of advantage, with the rest of their fellow-subjects. And that some tithes, in the hands of impropriators, are under settlements and mortgages.

X. That the gentlemen of this House should consider, that loading the clergy is loading their own younger brothers and children; with this additional grievance, that it is taking from the younger and poorer, to give to the elder and richer; and,

Lastly, That, if it were at any time just and

proper to do this, it would, however, be too severe to do it now, when all the tithes of the kingdom are known, for some years past, to have sunk above one-third part in their value.

Any income in the hands of the clergy, is at least as useful to the public as the same income in the hands of the laity.

It were more reasonable to grant the clergy in three parts of the nation an additional support, than to diminish their present subsistence.

Great employments are and will be in the hands of Englishmen; nothing left for the younger sons of Irishmen, but vicarages, tide-waiters' places, &c.; therefore no reason to make them worse.

The *modus* upon the flax in England affects only lands reclaimed since the year 1690, and is at the rate of five shillings the English acre, which is equivalent to eight shillings and eightpence Irish, and that to be paid before the farmer removes it from the field. Flax is a manufacture of little consequence in England, but is the staple in Ireland; and if it increases (as it probably will) must, in many places, jostle out corn, because it is more gainful.

The clergy of the established church have no interest, like those of the church of Rome, distinct from the true interest of their country; and therefore ought to suffer under no distinct impositions or taxes of any kind.

The bill for settling the *modus* of flax in England, was brought in the first year of the reign of King George I., when the clergy lay very unjustly under the imputation of some disaffection; and to encourage the bringing in of some fens in Lincolnshire, which were not to be continued under flax; but it left all lands, where flax had been sown before that time, under the same condition of tithing, in which they were before the passing of that bill:

whereas this bill takes away what the clergy are actually possessed of.

That the woollen manufacture is the staple of England, as the linen is that of Ireland; yet no attempt was ever made in England to reduce the tithe of wool, for the encouragement of that manufacture. This manufacture has already been remarkably favoured by the clergy, who have hitherto been generally content with less than half, some with sixpence a garden, and some have taken nothing.

Employments, they say, have been taxed; the reasons for which taxation will not hold with regard to property, at least till employments become inheritances. The commons always have had so tender a regard to property, that they never would suffer any law to pass, whereby any particular persons might be aggrieved, without their own consent.

N.B.—Some alterations have been made in the bill about the *modus*, since the above paper was written; but they are of little moment.

TRACTS

ON

THE TEST ACT.

A LETTER

FROM A

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN IRELAND,

TO A

MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN ENGLAND,

CONCERNING THE

SACRAMENTAL TEST.

WRITTEN IN 1708.

—o—

In accomplishing the Revolution in England, the services of the established church had been chiefly conspicuous. The dissenters had at one time (if the expression can be permitted) coquetted with James II., and shewed some disposition to accommodate themselves to his plans of arbitrary power, in order to gratify their vengeance, by enjoying the degradation, and, perhaps, the fall of the church of England. And, although they recovered from this delusion, yet they must be considered rather as falling in with and aiding the general current of opinion, than as leading and directing it against the abdicated monarch. But in Ireland the case was different. The union and valour of the dissenting Protestants in Ulster, gave the first positive and

effectual check to the domination of Tyrconnel; for the bands of Inniskilling and Londonderry were chiefly levied from these zealous sectaries. Those statesmen, therefore, who desired a repeal of the Test Act, in favour of Protestant Dissenters, were desirous that the experiment should be first tried in Ireland, where the recent merits of the Presbyterians might reasonably claim the most favourable hearing. Accordingly the Whig ministry in 1707–8 seem to have seriously determined upon the experiment. But the Irish clergy, seeing this matter, as was natural, in a very different light, determined to resist it to their uttermost power. Swift was at once the boldest and most zealous champion of their cause; and the following letter, in which his high-church principles are avowed, with an undisguised contempt of his antagonists, may be considered as decisive of the breach between him and Godolphin's administration.

In the Miscellanies, published by Morphew, in 1711, the following advertisement, by Dr. Swift, is prefixed:

"The following letter is supposed, by some judicious persons, to be of the same author, and, if their conjectures be right, it will be of no disadvantage to him to have it revived, considering the time when it was writ, the persons then at the helm, and the designs in agitation, against which this paper so boldly appeared. I have been assured, that the suspicion which the supposed author lay under for writing this letter, absolutely ruined him with the late ministry. I have taken leave to omit about a page, which was purely personal, and of no use to the subject."

The pamphlet may be considered as having materially contributed to the loss of the bill for repeal of the Test Act, during the Earl of Pembroke's viceroyalty.

The Dissenters renewed their struggles upon many occasions; and Swift, while he retained his life and faculties, was always ready to oppose them. The several Tracts which he wrote upon this subject, though remote in order of time, are here printed together, as reflecting light upon each other.

—o—

SIR,

Dublin, Dec. 4, 1708.

I RECEIVED your letter, wherein you tell me of the strange representations made of us on your side of the water. The instance you are pleased to mention is that of the Presbyterian missionary, who, according to your phrase, has been lately per-

secuted at Drogheda for his religion; but it is easy to observe, how mighty industrious some people have been for three or four years past, to hand about stories of the hardships, the merits, the number, and the power of the Presbyterians in Ireland; to raise formidable ideas of the dangers of Popery there, and to transmit all for England, improved by great additions, and with special care to have them inserted, with comments, in those infamous weekly papers that infest your coffeehouses. So when the clause enacting a Sacramental Test was put in execution, it was given out in England, that half the justices of peace, through this kingdom, had laid down their commissions: whereas, upon examination, the whole number was found to amount only to a dozen or thirteen, and those generally of the lowest rate in fortune and understanding, and some of them superannuated. So when the Earl of Pembroke was in Ireland, and the parliament sitting, a formal story was very gravely carried to his excellency, by some zealous members, of a priest newly arrived from abroad to the north-west parts of Ireland, who had publicly preached to his people, to fall a-murdering the Protestants; which, though invented to serve an end they were then upon, and are still driving at, was presently handed over, and printed with shrewd remarks by your worthy scribblers. In like manner, the account of that person, who was lately expelled our university for reflecting on the memory of King William: what a dust it raised, and how foully it was related, is fresh enough in memory.* Neither would people be convinced, till the university was at the pains

* The Provost and Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, had lately expelled Edward Forbes, for the cause mentioned in the text.

of publishing a Latin paper to justify themselves. And, to mention no more, this story of the persecution at Drogheda, how it has been spread and aggravated, what consequences have been drawn from it, and what reproaches fixed on those who have least deserved them, we are already informed. Now, if the end of all this proceeding were a secret and mystery, I should not pretend to give it an interpretation; but sufficient care has been taken to explain it, first by addresses artificially (if not illegally) procured, to shew the miserable state of the dissenters in Ireland, by reason of the Sacramental Test, and to desire the Queen's intercession that it might be repealed. Then it is manifest, that our Speaker,* when he was last year in England, solicited in person several members of both houses to have it repealed by an act there; though it be a matter purely national, that cannot possibly interfere with the trade and interest of England; and though he himself appeared formerly the most zealous of all men, against the injustice of binding a nation by laws, to which they do not consent. And, lastly, those weekly libellers, whenever they get a tale by the end relating to Ireland, without once troubling their thoughts about the truth, always end it with an application against the Sacramental Test, and the absolute necessity there is of repealing it in both kingdoms. I know it may be reckoned a weakness to say anything of such trifles as are below a serious man's notice; much less would I disparage the understanding of any party, to think they would choose the vilest and most ignorant among mankind, to employ them for the assertors

* Allan Broderick, Esq., formerly Solicitor-General of Ireland. He was afterwards created Baron Broderick, and died in 1715.

of a cause. I shall only say, that the scandalous liberty those wretches take would hardly be allowed if it were not mingled with opinions that some men would be glad to advance. Besides, how insipid soever those papers are, they seem to be levelled to the understandings of a great number; they are grown a necessary part in coffeehouse furniture, and some time or other may happen to be read by customers of all ranks, for curiosity and amusement, because they lie always in the way. One of these authors (the fellow that was pilloried, I have forgot his name*) is indeed so grave, sententious, dogmatical a rogue, that there is no enduring him; the Observator † is much the brisker of the two, and I think farther gone of late in lies and impudence, than his Presbyterian brother. The reason why I mention him, is, to have an occasion of letting you know, that you have not dealt so gallantly with us, as we did with you in a parallel case: last year a paper was brought here from England, called "A Dialogue between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Higgins," which we ordered to be burnt by the common hangman, as it well deserved, though we have no more to do with his Grace of Canterbury,‡ than you have with the Archbishop of Dublin: § nor can you love and reverence your prelate more than we do ours, whom you tamely suffer to be abused openly, and by name, by that paltry rascal of an Observator; and lately upon an affair wherein he had no concern; I mean the business of the missionary of Drogheda, wherein our excellent primate was engaged, and did nothing but according to law and discretion. But because the Lord Archbishop of Dublin has been upon several occasions,

* Daniel Defoe.
† Mr. John Tutchin.
‡ Dr. Thomas Tenison.
§ Dr. William King.

of late years, misrepresented in England, I would willingly set you right in his character.* For his great sufferings and eminent services he was by the late King promoted to the see of Derry. About the same time he wrote a book to justify the Revolution, wherein was an account of King James's proceedings in Ireland; and the late Archbishop Tillotson recommended it to the King, as the most serviceable treatise that could have been published at such a juncture.† And as his grace set out upon those principles, he has proceeded so ever since, as a loyal subject to the Queen, entirely for the succession in the Protestant line, and for ever excluding the Pretender; and though a firm friend to the church, yet with indulgence toward dissenters, as appears from his conduct at Derry, where he was settled for many years among the most virulent of the sect, yet upon his removal to Dublin, they parted from him with tears in their eyes, and universal acknowledgments of his wisdom and goodness.‡ For the rest it must be owned, he does not busy himself by entering deep into any party, but

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* This character of Archbishop King is retained in the Miscellany of 1727, edited by Pope, but erased in the Dublin edition of the Dean's Works, in 1735, published under his own inspection.

† Dr. King was twice imprisoned in the castle of Dublin after the landing of King James in Ireland, in 1699, and narrowly escaped assassination. The title of the work alluded to is, "The State of the Protestants in Ireland, under the late King James's Government, in which their carriage towards him is justified, and the absolute necessity of their endeavouring to be freed from his Government, and of submitting to their present Majesties, is demonstrated."

‡ Yet King was engaged in a controversy concerning non-conformity, with Joseph Boyse, afterwards mentioned, one of the principal dissenting clergymen in his diocese. This dispute, which was maintained with unwonted decorum on both parts, commenced on Bishop King's publishing a treatise entitled, "The Inventions of Men in the Worship of God." 4to, 1694.

rather spends his time in acts of hospitality and charity, in building of churches, repairing his palace, in introducing and preferring the worthiest persons he can find, without other regards: in short, in the practice of all virtues, that can become a public or private life. This and more, if possible, is due to so excellent a person, who may be justly reckoned among the greatest and most learned prelates of this age, however his character may be defiled by such mean and dirty hands as those of the Observator, or such as employ him.

I now come to answer the other part of your letter, and shall give you my opinion freely about repealing the Sacramental Test; only, whereas you desire my thoughts as a friend, and not as I am a member of parliament, I must assure you they are exactly the same in both capacities.

I must begin by telling you, we are generally surprised at your wonderful kindness to us on this occasion, it being so very industrious to teach us to see our interest in a point, where we are so unable to see it ourselves. This has given us some suspicion; and though in my own particular I am hugely bent to believe, that whenever you concern yourselves in our affairs, it is certainly for our good, yet I have the misfortune to be something singular in this belief; and therefore I never attempt to justify it, but content myself to possess my own opinion in private, for fear of encountering men of more wit or words than I have to spare.

We at this distance, who see nothing of the spring of actions, are forced, by mere conjecture, to assign two reasons for your desiring us to repeal the Sacramental Test. One is, because you are said to imagine it will be a step toward the like good work in England; the other more immediate, that it will open a way for rewarding several persons, who have

well deserved upon a great occasion, but who are now unqualified through that impediment.

I do not frequently quote poets, especially English; but I remember there is in some of Mr. Cowley's love verses a strain, that I thought extraordinary at fifteen, and have often since imagined it to be spoken by Ireland:

> "Forbid it, Heaven, my life should be
> Weigh'd with her least conveniency:"

In short, whatever advantage you propose to yourselves by repealing the Sacramental Test, speak it out plainly; it is the best argument you can use, for we value your interest much more than our own; if your little finger be sore, and you think a poultice made of our vitals will give it any ease, speak the word, and it shall be done: the interest of our whole kingdom is at any time ready to strike to that of your poorest fishing towns: it is hard you will not accept our services, unless we believe at the same time, that you are only consulting our profit, and giving us marks of your love. If there be a fire at some distance, and I immediately blow up my house before there be occasion, because you are a man of quality, and apprehend some danger to a corner of your stable; yet why should you require me to attend next morning at your levee, with my humble thanks for the favour you have done me?

If we might be allowed to judge for ourselves, we had abundance of benefit by the Sacramental Test, and foresee a number of mischiefs would be the consequence of repealing it; and we conceive the objections made against it by the dissenters are of no manner of force. They tell us of their merits in the late war in Ireland, and how cheerfully they engaged for the safety of the nation; that if they had

thought they had been fighting only other people's quarrels, perhaps it might have cooled their zeal; and that for the future they shall sit down quietly, and let us do our work ourselves; nay, that it is necessary they should do so, since they cannot take up arms under the penalty of high treason.*

Now supposing them to have done their duty, as I believe they did, (and not to trouble them about the fly on the wheel,) I thought liberty, property, and religion, had been the three subjects of the quarrel; and have not all those been amply secured to them? had they not at that time a mental reservation for power and employments? and must these two articles be added henceforward in our national quarrels? It is grown a mighty conceit among some men, to melt down the phrase of a church established by law, into that of the religion of the magistrate; of which appellation it is easier to find the reason than the sense: if by the magistrate they mean the prince, the expression includes a falsehood; for when King James was prince, the established church was the same it is now. If by the same word they mean the legislature, we desire no more. Be that as it will, we of this kingdom believe the church of Ireland to be the national church, and the only one established by law, and are willing by the same law to give a toleration to dissenters; but if once we repeal our Sacramental Test, and grant a toleration, or suspend the execution of the penal laws, I do not see how we can be said to have any established church remaining; or rather, why there will not be as many established churches, as there are sects of dissenters. No, say they, yours will still be the

* This high language had been held by a representation from a provincial synod of the Ulster dissenters.

national church, because your bishops and clergy are maintained by the public; but that I suppose will be of no long duration, and it would be very unjust it should, because, to speak in Tindal's phrase, it is not reasonable that revenues should be annexed to one opinion, more than another, when all are equally lawful; and it is the same author's maxim, that no freeborn subject ought to pay for maintaining speculations he does not believe. But why should any man, upon account of opinions he cannot help, be deprived of the opportunity of serving his Queen and country? Their zeal is commendable, and when employments go a-begging for want of hands, they shall be sure to have the refusal, only upon condition they will not pretend to them upon maxims, which equally include atheists, Turks, Jews, infidels, and heretics; or, which is still more dangerous, even Papists themselves: the former you allow, the other you deny; because these last own a foreign power, and therefore must be shut out. But there is no great weight in this; for their religion can suit with free states, with limited or absolute monarchies, as well as a better; and the Pope's power in France is but a shadow; so that, upon this foot, there need be no great danger to the constitution, by admitting Papists to employments. I will help you to enough of them who shall be ready to allow the Pope as little power here as you please: and the bare opinion of his being vicar of Christ, is but a speculative point, for which no man, it seems, ought to be deprived of the capacity of serving his country.

But, if you please, I will tell you the great objection we have against repealing this same Sacramental Test. It is, that we are verily persuaded, the consequence will be an entire alteration of religion among us, in no great compass of years. And

pray, observe how we reason here in Ireland upon this matter.

We observe the Scots, in our northern parts, to be a brave, industrious people, extremely devoted to their religion, and full of an undisturbed affection toward each other. Numbers of that noble nation, invited by the fertilities of the soil, are glad to exchange their barren hills of Loquabar, by a voyage of three hours, for our fruitful vales of Down and Antrim, so productive of that grain, which, at little trouble and less expense, finds diet and lodging for themselves and their cattle.* These people, by their extreme parsimony, wonderful dexterity in dealing, and firm adherence to one another, soon grow into wealth from the smallest beginnings, never are rooted out where they once fix, and increase daily by new supplies: besides, when they are the superior number in any tract of ground, they are not over patient of mixture; but such, whom they cannot assimilate, soon found it their interest to remove. I have done all in my power, on some land of my own, to preserve two or three English fellows in their neighbourhood, but found it impossible, though one of them thought he had sufficiently made his court by turning Presbyterian. Add to all this, that they bring along with them from Scotland a most formidable notion of our church, which they look upon at least three degrees worse than Popery; and it is natural it should be so, since they come over full fraught with that spirit which taught them to abolish Episcopacy at home.

Then we proceed farther, and observe, that the gentlemen of employments here make a very con-

* From this passage, perhaps, Johnson derived the famous definition of Oats, in his Dictionary, as the food of horses in England, and of men in Scotland.

siderable number in the House of Commons, and have no other merit, but that of doing their duty in their several stations; therefore, when the Test is repealed, it will be highly reasonable they should give place to those who have much greater services to plead. The commissions of the revenue are soon disposed of, and the collectors and other officers throughout this kingdom are generally appointed by the commissioner, which gives them a mighty influence in every county. As much may be said of the great offices in the law; and when this door is open to let dissenters into the commissions of the peace, to make them high sheriffs, mayors of corporations, and officers of the army and militia, I do not see how it can be otherwise, considering their industry and our supineness, but that they may, in a very few years, grow to a majority in the House of Commons, and consequently make themselves the national religion, and have a fair pretence to demand the revenues of the church for their teachers. I know it will be objected, that if all this should happen as I describe, yet the Presbyterian religion could never be made the national by act of Parliament, because our bishops are so great a number in the House of Lords; and without a majority there, the church could not be abolished. But I have two very good expedients for that, which I shall leave you to guess, and I dare swear our Speaker here has often thought on, especially having endeavoured at one of them so lately. To convince you, that this design is not so foreign from some people's thoughts, I must let you know that an honest bellwether of our house,* (you have him now in England, I wish you could keep him there,) had the impudence some years ago, in Parliament time, to shake my Lord

* Supposed to be Mr. Broderick.

Bishop of Kilaloo * by his lawn sleeve, and tell him, in a threatening manner, "that he hoped to live to see the day when there should not be one of his order in the kingdom."

These last lines perhaps you think a digression; therefore to return: I have told you the consequences we fully reckon upon, from repealing the Sacramental Test, which, although the greatest number of such as are for doing it are actually in no manner of pain about it, and many of them care not threepence whether there be any church or not; yet because they pretend to argue from conscience, as well as policy and interest, I thought it proper to understand and answer them accordingly.

Now, sir, in answer to your question, whether, if any attempt should be made here for repealing the Sacramental Test, it would be likely to succeed? the number of professed dissenters in this Parliament was, as I remember, something under a dozen, and I cannot call to mind above thirty others who were expected to fall in with them. This is certain, that the Presbyterian party, having with great industry mustered up their forces, did endeavour one day, upon occasion of a hint in my Lord Pembroke's speech, to introduce a debate about repealing the Test clause, when there appeared at least four to one odds against them; and the ablest of those, who were reckoned the most staunch and thorough-paced Whigs upon all other occasions, fell off with an abhorrence at the first mention of this.

I must desire you to take notice, that the terms of Whig and Tory, do not properly express the different interests in our parliament. I remember, when I was last in England, I told the King, "that the highest Tories we had with us would make

* Dr. Lindsay, afterward Lord Primate.

tolerable Whigs there." This was certainly right, and still in the general continues so, unless you have since admitted new characteristics, which did not come within our definition. Whoever bears a true veneration for the glorious memory of King William, as our great deliverer from Popery and slavery; whoever is firmly loyal to our present Queen, with an utter abhorrence and detestation of the Pretender; whoever approves the succession to the crown in the house of Hanover, and is for preserving the doctrine and discipline of the church of England, with an indulgence for scrupulous consciences; such a man we think acts upon right principles, and may be justly allowed a Whig: and I believe there are not six members in our House of Commons who may not fairly come under this description. So that the parties among us are made up, on one side, of moderate Whigs, and, on the other, of Presbyterians and their abettors; by which last I mean such who can equally go to a church or conventicle, or such who are indifferent to all religion in general; or, lastly, such who affect to bear a personal rancour toward the clergy: these last are a set of men not of our own growth, their principles at least have been imported of late years; yet this whole party, put together, will scarce, I am confident, amount to above fifty men in Parliament, which can hardly be worked up into a majority of three hundred.

As to the House of Lords, the difficulty there is conceived at least as great as in ours. So many of our temporal peers live in England, that the bishops are generally pretty near a par of the House, and we reckon they will be all to a man against repealing the Test; and yet their lordships are generally thought as good Whigs upon our principles, as any in the kingdom. There are indeed a few lay lords, who

appear to have no great devotion for Episcopacy; and perhaps one or two more, with whom certain powerful motives might be used for removing any difficulty whatsoever: but these are, in no sort, a number to carry any point against the conjunction of the rest, and the whole bench of bishops.

Besides, the whole body of our clergy is utterly against repealing the Test, though they are entirely devoted to her Majesty, and hardly one in a hundred who are not very good Whigs, in our acceptation of the word. And I must let you know, that we of Ireland are not yet come up to other folk's refinements, for we generally love and esteem our clergy, and think they deserve it; nay, we are apt to lay some weight upon their opinion, and would not willingly disoblige them, at least unless it were upon some greater point of interest than this. And their judgment in the present affair is the more to be regarded, because they are the last persons who will be affected by it: this makes us think them impartial, and that their concern is only for religion, and the interest of the kingdom. Because the act, which repeals the Test, will only qualify a layman for an employment, but not a Presbyterian or Anabaptist preacher for a church-living. Now I must take leave to inform you, that several members of our house, and myself among the rest, knowing some time ago what was upon the anvil, went to all the clergy we knew of any distinction, and desired their judgment of the matter; wherein we found a most wonderful agreement, there being but one divine that we could hear of in the whole kingdom who appeared of a contrary sentiment: wherein he afterward stood alone in the convocation, very little to his credit, though, as he hoped, very much to his interest.

I will now consider a little the arguments offered

to show the advantages, or rather the necessity, of repealing the Test in Ireland. We are told, the Popish interest is here so formidable, that all hands should be joined to keep it under: that the only names of distinction among us ought to be those of Protestant and Papist: and that this expedient is the only means to unite all Protestants upon one common bottom. All which is nothing but misrepresentation and mistake.

If we were under any real fear of the Papists in this kingdom, it would be hard to think us so stupid, as not to be equally apprehensive with others, since we are likely to be the greatest and more immediate sufferers; but, on the contrary, we look upon them to be altogether as inconsiderable as the women and children. Their lands are almost entirely taken from them, and they are rendered incapable of purchasing any more, and for the little that remains, provision is made by the late act against Popery, that it will daily crumble away: to prevent which, some of the most considerable among them are already turned Protestants, and so, in all probability, will many more. Then the Popish priests are all registered, and without permission (which I hope will not be granted) they can have no successors; so that the Protestant clergy will find it perhaps no difficult matter to bring great numbers over to the church; and in the meantime the common people, without leaders, without discipline, or natural courage, being little better than hewers of wood, and drawers of water, are out of all capacity of doing any mischief, if they were ever so well inclined. Neither are they at all likely to join, in any considerable numbers, with an invader, having found so ill success when they were much more numerous and powerful; when they had a prince of their own religion to head them, had been trained for some years under a

Popish deputy, and received such mighty aids from the French king.*

As to that argument used for repealing the Test, that it will unite all Protestants against the common enemy; I wonder by what figure those gentlemen speak, who are pleased to advance it: suppose, in order to increase the friendship between you and me, a law should pass, that I must have half your estate; do you think that would much advance the union between us? or suppose I share my fortune equally between my own children and a stranger, whom I take into my protection; will that be a method to unite them? It is an odd way of uniting parties, to deprive a majority of part of their ancient right, by conferring it on a faction, who had never any right at all, and therefore cannot be said to suffer any loss or injury, if it be refused them. Neither is it very clear, how far some people may stretch the term of common enemy. How many are there of those that call themselves Protestants who look upon our worship to be idolatrous, as well as that of the Papists, and, with great charity, put Prelacy and Popery together, as terms convertible?

And therefore there is one small doubt I would be willingly satisfied in, before I agree to the repealing of the Test; that is, whether these same Protestants, when they have, by their dexterity, made themselves the national religion, and disposed the church revenues among their pastors or themselves, will be so kind to allow us dissenters, I do not say a share in employments, but a bare toleration by law? The reason of my doubt is, because I have been so very idle, as to read above fifty pamphlets, written by as many Presbyterian

* In the reign of James II., and till after the battles of the Boyne and Aughrim, in 1690.

divines, loudly disclaiming this idol of toleration: some of them calling it (I know not how properly) a rag of Popery, and all agreeing it was to establish iniquity by law. Now I would be glad to know, when and where their successors have renounced this doctrine, and before what witnesses. Because, methinks I should be loth to see my poor titular bishop *in partibus*, seized on by mistake in the dark for a jesuit; or be forced myself to keep my chaplain disguised like my butler, and steal to prayers in a back room, as my grandfather used in those times, when the church of England was malignant.

But this is ripping up old quarrels long forgot; Popery is now the common enemy, against which we must all unite: I have been tired in history with the perpetual folly of those states, who call in foreigners to assist them against a common enemy: but the mischief was, these allies would never be brought to allow that the common enemy was quite subdued. And they had reason; for it proved at last, that one part of the common enemy was those who called them in, and so the allies became at length the masters.

It is agreed among naturalists, that a lion is a larger, a stronger, and more dangerous enemy than a cat; yet if a man were to have his choice, either a lion at his foot, bound fast with three or four chains, his teeth drawn out, and his claws pared to the quick, or an angry cat at full liberty at his throat, he would take no long time to determine.

I have been sometimes admiring the wonderful significancy of that word persecution, and what various interpretations it has acquired even within my memory. When I was a boy, I often heard the Presbyterians complain, that they were not permitted to serve God in their own way: they said they did not repine at our employments, but

thought that all men who live peaceably, ought to have liberty of conscience, and leave to assemble. That impediment being removed at the Revolution, they soon learned to swallow the Sacramental Test, and began to take very large steps, wherein all who offered to oppose them, were called men of a persecuting spirit. During the time the bill against occasional conformity was on foot, persecution was every day rung in our ears, and now at last the Sacramental Test itself has the same name. Where then is this matter likely to end, when the obtaining of one request is only used as a step to demand another? a lover is ever complaining of cruelty, while anything is denied him; when the lady ceases to be cruel, she is from the next moment at his mercy: so persecution, it seems, is everything, that will not leave it in men's power to persecute others.

There is one argument offered against a Sacramental Test, by a sort of men, who are content to be styled of the church of England, who perhaps attend its service in the morning, and go with their wives to a conventicle in the afternoon, confessing they hear very good doctrine in both. These men are much offended that so holy an institution as that of the Lord's Supper, should be made subservient to such mercenary purposes as the getting of an employment. Now it seems, the law, concluding all men to be members of that church where they receive the sacrament; and supposing all men to live like Christians, (especially those who are to have employments,) did imagine they received the sacrament in course about four times a-year; and therefore only desired it might appear by certificate to the public, that such, who took an office, were members of the church established, by doing their

ordinary duty. However, lest we should offend them, we have often desired they would deal candidly with us: for, if the matter stuck only there, we would propose it in parliament, that every man, who takes an employment, should, instead of receiving the sacrament, be obliged to swear, that he is a member of the church of Ireland by law established, with Episcopacy, and so forth; and as they do now in Scotland, to be true to the kirk. But when we drive them thus far, they always retire to the main body of the argument, urge the hardship that men should be deprived the liberty of serving their Queen and country on account of their conscience; and in short have recourse to the common style of their half brethren. Now, whether this be a sincere way of arguing, I will appeal to any other judgment but theirs.

There is another topic of clamour somewhat parallel to the foregoing: it seems by the Test clause, the military officers are obliged to receive the sacrament, as well as the civil. And it is a matter of some patience, to hear the dissenters declaiming upon this occasion: they cry they are disarmed, they are used like Papists: when an enemy appears at home, or from abroad, they must sit still, and see their throats cut, or be hanged for high treason if they offer to defend themselves. Miserable condition! woful dilemma! it is happy for us all, that the Pretender was not apprized of this passive Presbyterian principle, else he would have infallibly landed in our northern parts, and found them all sat down in their formalities, as the Gauls did the Roman senators, ready to die with honour in their callings. Sometimes to appease their indignation, we venture to give them hopes, that in such a case, the government will perhaps

connive, and hardly be so severe to hang them for defending it, against the letter of the law; to which they readily answer, that they will not lie at our mercy, but let us fight our battles ourselves. Sometimes we offer to get an act, by which, upon all Popish insurrections at home, or Popish invasion from abroad, the government shall be empowered to grant commissions to all Protestants whatsoever, without that persecuting circumstance of obliging them to say their prayers, when they receive the sacrament: but they abhor all thoughts of occasional commissions; they will not do our drudgery, and we reap the benefit: it is not worth their while to fight *pro aris et focis;* and they had rather lose their estates, liberties, religion, and lives, than the pleasure of governing.

But to bring this discourse toward a conclusion: if the dissenters will be satisfied with such a toleration by law, as has been granted them in England, I believe the majority of both Houses will fall readily in with it; farther, it will be hard to persuade this House of Commons, and perhaps much harder the next. For, to say the truth, we make a mighty difference here between suffering thistles to grow among us, and wearing them for posies. We are fully convinced in our consciences, that we shall always tolerate them; but not quite so fully that they will always tolerate us, when it comes to their turn; and we are the majority, and we are in possession.

He who argues in defence of a law in force, not antiquated or obsolete, but lately enacted, is certainly on the safer side, and may be allowed to point out the dangers he conceives to foresee, in the abrogation of it.

For, if the consequences of repealing this clause

should at some time or other enable the Presbyterians to work themselves up into the national church; instead of uniting Protestants, it would sow eternal divisions among them. *First*, their own sects, which now lie dormant, would be soon at cuffs again with each other about power and preferment; and the dissenting Episcopals, perhaps discontented to such a degree, as upon some fair unhappy occasion, would be able to shake the firmest loyalty, which none can deny theirs to be.

Neither is it very difficult to conjecture, from some late proceedings, at what a rate this faction is likely to drive, wherever it gets the whip and the seat. They have already set up courts of spiritual judicature in open contempt of the laws: they send missionaries everywhere, without being invited, in order to convert the church of England folks to Christianity. They are as vigilant as I know who, to attend persons on their death-beds, and for purposes much alike. And what practices such principles as these (with many other that might be invidious to mention) may spawn when they are laid out to the sun, you may determine at leisure.

Lastly, Whether we are so entirely sure of their loyalty upon the present foot of government, as you may imagine their detractors make a question, which, however, does, I think, by no means affect the body of dissenters; but the instance produced is, of some among their leading teachers in the north, who, having refused the abjuration oath, yet continue their preaching, and have abundance of followers. The particulars are out of my head; but the fact is notorious enough, and I believe has been published; I think it a pity, it has not been remedied.

Thus I have fairly given you, sir, my own

opinion, as well as that of a great majority in both Houses here, relating to this weighty affair; upon which I am confident you may securely reckon. I will leave you to make what use of it you please.

I am, with great respect, sir,

Yours, &c.

A NARRATIVE

OF THE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS, WHICH THE DISSENTERS OF IRELAND HAVE MADE, FOR A REPEAL OF THE SACRAMENTAL TEST.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO THE CONFORMING NOBILITY AND GENTRY IN IRELAND, 1731.*

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WHEN the oath of supremacy was repealed, which had been the church's great security, since the second of Queen Elizabeth, against both Papists and Presbyterians, who equally refused it, it let in such a current of dissenters into some of our corporations, as bore down all before them.

Although the Sacramental Test has been for a considerable time in force in England, yet that law did not reach Ireland, where the church was more

* This little tract was originally printed at Dublin in a periodical paper called The Correspondent; and was annexed to the second edition of the Presbyterians' Plea of Merit; and, to make room for it, the Ode to Humphry French, Esq., (which stood in the first edition,) was omitted in the second.—It may not be improper to observe, that it was answered, in "A Vindication of the Protestant Dissenters, from the Aspersions cast upon them in a late Pamphlet, entitled, the Presbyterians' Plea of Merit, &c., with some Remarks on a Paper called The Correspondent, giving a pretended Narrative," &c.

oppressed by dissenters, and where her most sanguine friends were glad to compound, to preserve what legal security she had left, rather than attempt any new, or even to recover what she had lost; and in truth they had no reason to expect it, at a time when the dissenters had the interest to have a motion made and debated in parliament, that there might be a temporary repeal of all the penal laws against them; and when they were so flushed with the conquest they had made in some corporations, as to reject all overtures of a toleration; and, to that end, had employed Mr. Boyse* to write against it with the utmost contempt, calling it "a stone instead of bread, a serpent instead of a fish."

When the church was in this situation, the clause of the Sacramental Test was happily sent over from England, tacked to the Popery bill; which alarmed the whole body of the dissenters to that degree, that their managers began to ply with the greatest artifice and industry to prevent its passing into a law. But (to the honour of that parliament be it spoken) the whole body of both Lords and Commons (some few excepted) passed the clause with great readiness, and defended it afterward with as great resolution.

The immediate consequence of this law was the recovery of several corporations from the dissenters, and the preservation of others, to which that enterprising people had made very bold and quick approaches.

It was hoped that this signal defeat would have discouraged the dissenters from any farther attempts

* The Rev. Samuel Boyse, a dissenting clergyman in Ulster, who had entered the lists upon the points of controversy between the Presbyterians and Church of England, and upon the Test Act. He was a native of Yorkshire, but settled in Dublin, where he died in 1728. His works are published in two volumes folio, in the same year.

against the law, which had so unanimously passed both Houses: but the contrary soon appeared: for, upon meeting of the parliament held by the Earl of Pembroke,* they quickly reassumed their wonted courage and confidence, and made no doubt but they should either procure an absolute repeal thereof, or get it so far relaxed, as that they might be admitted to offices of military trust: to this they apprehended themselves encouraged by a paragraph in his excellency's speech to both Houses, (which they applied to themselves,) which was, "that the Queen would be glad of any expedient for strengthening the interest of her Protestant subjects of Ireland."

The advocates for the dissenters immediately took hold of this handle; and, in order to prepare the way for this expedient, insisting boldly upon their merit and loyalty, charged the church with persecution, and extolled their signal behaviour in the late Revolution to that degree, as if by their singular prowess they had saved the nation.

But all this was only to prepare the way for the grand engine, which was forming to beat down this law; and that was their expedient-addresses.

The first of this kind was, from a provincial synod of the northern dissenters, beginning with high encomiums upon themselves, and as high demands from the public, "for their untainted loyalty in all turns of government, which," they said, "was the natural consequence of their known principles;" expressions, which, had they been applied to them by their adversaries, must have been understood as spoken ironically; and, indeed, to have been the greatest sarcasm imaginable upon them (especially when we consider the insolent treatment given to her late Majesty in the very

* His lordship's viceroyalty commenced April 7, 1707.

same address;) for, immediately after they pass this compliment upon themselves, they tell her Majesty, they deeply regret the Sacramental Test; and frankly declare, that neither the gentlemen nor people of their persuasion could (they must mean *would*) serve her, whatever exigencies might arise, unless that law was repealed.

The managers for the kirk, following this precedent, endeavoured to obtain addresses to the same purpose from the corporations; and though they proved unsuccessful in most, they procured them from our most considerable conforming corporations; and that too at a critical juncture, when numbers of Scotch Presbyterians, who had deserved well in the affair of the Union, and could not be rewarded in England, (where the Test Act was in force,) stood ready to overrun our preferments as soon as the Test should be repealed in Ireland.

But, after all, when it came to a decisive trial in the House of Commons, the dissenters were defeated.

When the managers found the House of Commons could not be brought into that scheme of an expedient, to be offered by them; their refinement upon this was, to move for an address, "That the House would accept of an expedient from her Majesty;" but this also was rejected; for, by this project, the managers would have led the Queen into this dilemma, either to disoblige the whole body of the dissenters, by refusing to name the expedient, or else to give up the conformists to the insults and encroachments of the dissenters, by the repeal of that law, which was declared by the House of Lords to be the great security of the established church, and of the English interest in Ireland.

The next attempt they made against the Test was

during the government of Lord Wharton.* The dissenters seemed more resolute now than ever to have the Test repealed, especially when his excellency had declared from the throne, "that they were neither to be persecuted nor molested." For they, who had all along called the Test Act a persecution, might reasonably conclude that grievance would be removed; when they were told by the chief governor, that "they were not even to be molested." But, to their great confusion, they were soon undeceived, when they found, upon trial, that the House of Commons would not bear the least motion toward it.

Their movements to repeal the Test being stopped this way, the managers were obliged to take several other ways to come at it: and at the time that some pretended to soothe, others seemed to threaten even the legislature.

There happened about that time, when the project of the expedient was on foot, an excellent occasion to express their resentments against this law, and that was, when great numbers of them refused the oath of allegiance, and to oppose the Pretender; insisting upon a repeal of the Test Act, as the condition of their arming in defence of their Queen and country. The government was not reduced to such straits, as to submit to that condition: and the Test stood firm, in spite of both the dissenters and the Pretender, until the latter was driven from our coasts; and then one would have thought the hopes of the former would have vanished with him.

But it proved quite contrary: for those sons of the earth, rebounding with fresh vigour from their fall, recovered new strength and spirit from every defeat; and the next attempt was bolder (consider-

* Appointed lord-lieutenant November 25, 1708.

ing the circumstance they were in) than any they had made before.

The case was this: the House of Lords of Ireland had accused them to the Queen of several illegal practices, which highly concerned the safety of our constitution both in church and state: the particulars of which charge were summed up in a representation from the Lords to this effect:

"That they (the dissenters) had opposed and persecuted the conformists in those parts where their power prevailed, had invaded their congregation, propagated their schism in places where it had not the least footing formerly; that they were protected from a legal prosecution by a *noli prosequi* in the case of Drogheda; that they refused to take conforming apprentices, and confined trade among themselves, exclusive of the conformists; that, in their illegal assemblies, they had prosecuted and censured their people for being married according to law; that they have thrown public and scandalous reflections upon the Episcopal order, and upon our laws, particularly the Sacramental Test, and had misapplied the royal bounty of £1200 *per annum* in propagating their schism, and undermining the church; and had exercised an illegal jurisdiction in their presbyteries and synods, &c."

To this representation of the Lords, the dissenters remonstrate in an address to the Queen, or rather an appeal to their own people; in which, although it is evident they were conscious of those crimes whereof they stood accused, as appears by the evasions they make to this high charge; yet, even under these circumstances, (such was their modesty,) they pressed for a repeal of the Test Act, by the modest appellation of a grievance, and odious mark of infamy, &c.

One particular in another address I cannot omit.

The House of Lords, in their representation, had accused one dissenting teacher in particular, (well known to Mr. Boyse;) the charge was in these words: "Nor has the legislature itself escaped the censure of a bold author of theirs, who has published in print that the Sacramental Test is only an engine to advance a state faction, and to debase religion, to serve base and unworthy purposes."

To this Mr. Boyse answers, in an address to the Queen, in the year 1712, subscribed only by himself and five more dissenting teachers, in the following manner:

"As to this part of their Lordships' complaint, we beg leave to lay before your Majesty the words of that author; which are these: *Nor can we altogether excuse those who turn the holy Eucharist into an engine to advance a state faction, and endeavour to confine the communion table of our Lord, by their arbitrary enclosures, to a party: religion is thereby debased, to serve mean and unworthy purposes.*—We humbly conceive, that the author, in that passage, makes no mention of the legislature at all, &c.; and we cannot omit, on this occasion, to regret it, as the great unhappiness of a kingdom, that dissenters should now be disabled from concurring in the defence of it, in any future exigency and danger, and should have the same infamy put upon them with the Irish Papists. We therefore humbly hope, that your Majesty shall consider, how little real grounds there are for those complaints made by their Lordships."

What a mixture of impudence and prevarication is this! That one dissenting teacher, accused to his prince of having censured the legislature, should presume, backed only by five more of the same quality and profession, to transcribe the guilty paragraph, and (to secure his meaning from all possi-

bility of being mistaken) annex another to it; wherein they rail at that very law for which he in so audacious a manner censured the Queen and Parliament, and at the same time should expect to be acquitted by her Majesty, because he had not mentioned the word legislature. It is true, the word legislature is not expressed in that paragraph; but let Mr. Boyse * say, what other power but the legislature could in this sense, "turn the holy Eucharist into an engine to advance a state faction, or confine offices of trust, or the communion table of our Lord, by their arbitrary enclosures, to a party." It is plain he can from his principles intend no others but the legislators of the Sacramental Test; though, at the same time, I freely own, that this is a vile description of them; for neither have they by this law made the Sacramental Test an engine to advance, but rather to depress, a state faction; nor have they made any arbitrary enclosures of the communion table of the Lord, since as many as please may receive the sacrament with us in our churches; and those who will not may freely, as before, receive it in their separate congregations: nor, in the last place, is religion hereby debased to serve mean and unworthy purposes; nor is it any more than all lawgivers do, by enjoining an oath of allegiance, and making that a religious test; for an oath is an act of religious worship as well as the Eucharist.

Upon the whole, is not this an instance of prodigious boldness in Jo. Boyse, backed with only five dissenting teachers, thus to recriminate upon the Irish House of Lords, (as they were pleased to call

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* Mr. Boyse is here and in other places spoken of as alive, which was the case, I presume, when the tract first appeared in the Correspondent. But as his funeral sermon was preached 8th December 1728, he was certainly dead before the republication.

them in the title of their printed address;) and almost to insist with her Majesty upon the repeal of the law, which she had stamped with her royal authority but a few years before?

The next attempt of the dissenters against this law was made during the government of the Duke of Shrewsbury,* by the whole compacted body of their teachers and elders, with a formidable engine, called a representation of grievances; in which, after they had reviled the Test Act with the same odious appellations, and insisted upon the same insolent arguments for the repeal thereof, which they had formerly urged to the Queen, they expressed themselves to his grace in these words: "We beg leave to say, that those persons must be inexcusable, and chargeable with all the bad consequences that may follow, who, in such a kingdom as this, and at such a time as this, disable, disgrace, and divide Protestants; a thing that ought not to be done at any time, or in any place, much less then in this," &c.

Is it possible to conceive anything more provoking than this humble supplication of these remonstrators? Does not this sound like a demand of the repeal of the Test, at the peril of those who dare refuse it? Is it not an application with a hat in one hand, and a sword in the other, and that too in the style of a King of Ulster, to a King of Connaught —"Repeal the Test, or if you don't—"

But to proceed in this narrative: notwithstanding the defeat of the dissenters in England, in their late attempt against the Test, their brethren in Ireland are so far from being discouraged, that they seem now to conceive greater hopes of having it repealed here than ever. In order to prepare necessaries, and furnish topics for this attempt, there was a

* From September 1713, till the Queen's death.

paper printed upon the opening of last session, and now republished, entitled, "The Nature and Consequences of the Sacramental Test considered, with Reasons humbly offered for the Repeal thereof."

It is not my intention to follow this author through all the mazes and windings of his reasoning upon this subject, which, in truth, seem such incoherent shreds, that it is impossible to tie them together; and therefore what I propose is to answer such objections to the Test, as are advanced either by this author or any other, which have any appearance of reason or plausibility.

I know it is not prudent to despise an adversary, nor fair to prepossess readers, before I shew this bold and insolent writer in his proper figure and dress; and therefore, however I may take him to be a feeble advocate for the repeal of the Test in point of reasoning, yet I freely allow him to be a most resolute champion in point of courage, who has, with such intrepidity, attacked not only the first enactors of this law, but all such who shall continue it, by giving their negatives to the repeal.

Page 19, he says, "the truth is the imposition of the Test, and continuing it in such a state of the kingdom, appears (at first sight) so great an absurdity in politics, as can never be accounted for."

Who are these absurd politicians? are they not the majority of both Houses of Parliament?

But, to strengthen his reflections, page 26, he gives the whole legislature to understand, "that continuing the Test, does not become the wisdom and justice of the legislature, under the pretence of its being for the advantage of the state, when it is really prejudicial to it:" and farther tells us, "it infringes on the indisputable right of the dissenters."

Page 57, he says, "The gentlemen of the House

of Commons, who framed the bill to prevent the farther growth of Popery, instead of approving the Test clause which was inserted, publicly declared their dislike to it, and their resolution to take the first opportunity of repealing it, though at that time they unwillingly passed it, rather than lose a bill they were so fond of. This resolution has not been as yet fulfilled, for what reasons our worthy patriots themselves know best."

I should be glad this author would inform us, who and how many of those members joined in this resolution to repeal the Test; or where that resolution is to be found, which he mentions twice in that same paragraph; surely not in the books of the House of Commons!

If not, suppose some few gentlemen of the House of Commons (and to be sure very few they were) who publicly declared their dislike to it, or entered into any resolution; this, I think, he should have explained, and not insinuated so gross a reflection on a majority of the House of Commons, who first passed this law, and have ever since opposed all attempts to repeal it; these are the gentlemen whom, in sarcasm and irony, he is pleased to call the worthy, that is, the unworthy patriots themselves.

But, to mention no more, he concludes his notable piece with these remarkable words, page 62, 63:

"Thus it appears, with regard to the Protestant succession, which has now happily taken place, how reasonable it is to repeal the Sacramental Test; and that granting that favour to the Dissenters, [which, by the by, cannot be granted but by parliament,] can be disagreeable to none who have a just sense of the many blessings we enjoy by the Protestant succession in his Majesty's royal family."

I conceive it will be readily allowed, that, in all

applications from any body of men, or particular subjects, to the legislature, the highest encomiums are to be looked upon as purely complimental; but that the least insinuation of disrespect ought to be considered in the strictest sense the expressions can bear. Now, if we apply this observation to what this bold adventurer has said with respect to the legislators of the Sacramental Test, does he not directly and plainly charge them with injustice, imprudence, gross absurdity, and Jacobitism? Let the most prejudiced reader, that is not predetermined against conviction, say, whether this libeller of the parliament has not drawn up a high charge against the makers and continuers of this law.

Notwithstanding my resentment, which to be sure he does not value, I would be sorry he should bring upon himself the resentment of those he has been so free with. Is not this author justly to be reputed a defamer, till he produces instances wherein the conforming nobility and gentry of Ireland have shewn their disaffection to the succession of the illustrious house of Hanover?

Did they ever refuse the oath of adjuration, or support any conforming nonjuring teachers in their congregations? Did ever any conforming gentlemen, or common people, refuse to be arrayed, when the militia was raised upon the invasion of the Pretender? Did any of them ever shew the least reluctance, or make any exception against their officers, whether they were dissenters or churchmen?

It may be said, that, from these insinuations, I would have it understood, that the dissenters encouraged some of their teachers who refused the oath of adjuration; and that, even in the article of danger, when the Pretender made an attempt in Scotland, our northern Presbyterians shewed great

reluctance in taking arms upon the array of the militia.

I freely own it is my intention; and I must affirm both facts to be true, however they have the assurance to deny it.

What can be more notorious, than the protection, countenance, and support, which was continued to Riddall, M'Bride, and M'Crackan, who absolutely refused the oath of abjuration, and yet were continued to teach in their congregations after they returned from Scotland, when a prosecution was directed, and a council in criminal causes was sent down to the county of Antrim, to prosecute them? With respect to the parliament; Did ever any House of Commons shew greater alacrity in raising money, and equipping ships in defence of the King, than the last House did upon the expected invasion of the Pretender? And did ever any parliament give money with greater unanimity, for the support of the Crown, than the present has done, whatever the wants of their private families might be? And must a very great majority of those persons be branded with the infamous aspersion of disaffection to the illustrious house of Hanover, should they refuse to give their voices for the repeal of the Test?

I am fully persuaded that this author, and his fellow-labourers, do not believe one word of this heavy charge; but their present circumstances are such that they must run all hazards.

A great number of the nonconforming gentlemen daily leave them. Many men, whose fathers were elders, or rigid nonconformists, are now constant communicants, and justices of peace in their several counties; insomuch that it is highly probable, should the Test continue twenty years longer, that there would not be a gentleman left to solicit a repeal.

I shall hereafter take occasion to shew how inconsiderable they are, for their numbers and fortunes, who can be served or obliged by this repeal, which number is daily lessening. The dissenting teachers are sufficiently aware, that the general conformity of the gentlemen will be followed by the conformity of numbers of the people; and, should it not be so, that they will be but poorly supported by them; that by the continuance of the Test, their craft will be in danger to be set at naught, and in all probability will end in a general conformity of the Presbyterians to the established church. So that they have the strongest reasons in the world to press for a repeal of the Test; but those reasons must have equal force for the continuance of it, with all that wish the peace of the church and state, and would not have us torn in pieces with endless and causeless divisions.

There is one short passage more I had like to have omitted, which our author leaves as a sting in the tail of his libel; his words are these, p. 59.— "The truth is, no one party of a religious denomination, in Britain or Ireland, were so united as they, (the dissenters,) indeed no one but they, in an inviolable attachment to the Protestant succession." To detect the folly of this assertion, I subjoin the following letter from a person of known integrity, and inviolably attached to the Protestant succession as any dissenter in the kingdom; I mean Mr. Warreng, of Warrengstown, then a member of parliament, and commissioner of array in the county of Down, upon the expected invasion of the Pretender. This letter was writ in a short time after the array of the militia; for the truth of which I refer to Mr. Warreng himself:—

"Sir, that I may fulfil your desire, by giving you

an account how the dissenters in my neighbourhood behaved themselves when we were threatened with an invasion of the Pretender, be pleased to know, that, upon an alarm given of his being landed near Derry, none were more zealous in setting watch and keeping guard than they, to prevent such disorders as might happen at that time by ill-designing persons passing through and disturbing the peace of the country.

"But, when the government thought fit to have the kingdom arrayed, and sent commissioners into these parts, some time after, it appeared that the dissenters had by that time been otherwise instructed; for several, who were so forward before, behaved themselves after a very different manner, some refusing, and others with reluctancy appearing upon the array, to be enlisted and serve in the militia.

"This behaviour surprised me so much, that I took occasion to discourse several of them, over whom I thought I had as much influence as any other person, and sound them upon the common argument of having their hands tied by a late act of parliament, &c. Whereupon I took some pains to shew the act to them, and wherein they were mistaken. I farther pressed their concurrence with us, in procuring the common peace and security of our country; and though they seemed convinced by what I said, yet I was given to understand, their behaviour was according to the sentiments of some persons, whom they thought themselves obliged to observe, or to be directed by," &c.

THE

PRESBYTERIANS' PLEA OF MERIT,

IN ORDER TO TAKE OFF THE TEST,

IMPARTIALLY EXAMINED, 1731.

WE have been told, in the common newspapers, that all attempts are to be made this session by the Presbyterians, and their abettors, for taking off the Test; as a kind of preparatory step to make it go down smoother in England. For, if once their light would so shine, the Papists, delighted with the blaze, would all come in and dance about it. This I take to be a prudent method; like that of a discreet physician, who first gives a new medicine to a dog, before he prescribes it to a human creature.

The Presbyterians have, ever since the Revolution, directed their learned casuists to employ their pens on this subject, by shewing their merits and pretensions, upon which they claim this justice, as founded upon the services they did toward the restoration of King Charles the Second, and at the Revolution under the Prince of Orange. Which pleas I take to be the most singular in their kind, that ever were offered in the face of the sun, against

the most glaring lights of truth, and against a continuation of public facts, known to all Europe, for twenty years together. I shall therefore impartially examine the merits and conduct of the Presbyterians upon those two great events; and the pretensions to favour which they challenge upon them.

Soon after the reformation in the church in England, under Edward the Sixth, upon Queen Mary's succeeding to the crown, (who restored Popery,) many Protestants fled out of England, to escape the persecution raised against the church, as her brother had left it established. Some of these exiles went to Geneva; which city had received the doctrine of Calvin, and rejected the government of bishops, with many other refinements. These English exiles readily embraced the Geneva system; and having added farther improvements of their own, upon Queen Mary's death returned to England; where they preached up their own opinions, inveighing bitterly against episcopacy, and all rites and ceremonies, however innocent and ancient in the church: building upon this foundation, to run as far as possible from Popery, even in the most minute and indifferent circumstances. This faction, under the name of Puritan, became very turbulent during the whole reign of Queen Elizabeth, and were always discouraged by that wise queen, as well as by her two successors. However, their numbers, as well as their insolence and perverseness, so far increased, that soon after the death of King James the First, many instances of their petulancy and scurrility are to be seen in their pamphlets, written for some years after, (which was a trade they began in the days of Queen Elizabeth,) particularly with great rancour against the bishops, the habits, and the ceremonies: such were those scurrilous libels under the title of Martin Mar-prelate, and several

others. And although the Earl of Clarendon tells us, until the year 1640 (as I remember) the kingdom was in a state of perfect peace and happiness, without the least appearance of thought or design toward making any alterations in religion or government; yet I have found, by often rummaging for old books in Little Britain and Duck-Lane, a great number of pamphlets, printed from the year 1550 to 1640, full of as bold and impious railing expressions against the lawful power of the Crown, and the order of bishops, as ever were uttered during the rebellion, or the whole subsequent tyranny of that fanatic anarchy. However, I find it manifest, that Puritanism did not erect itself into a new, separate species of religion, till some time after the rebellion began: for, in the latter times of King James the First, and the former part of his son, there were several Puritan bishops, and many Puritan private clergymen; while people went, as their inclinations led them, to hear preachers of each party in the parish churches; for the Puritan clergy had received episcopal orders, as well as the rest. But soon after the rebellion broke out, the term Puritan gradually dropped, and that of Presbyterian succeeded; which sect was, in two or three years, established in all its forms, by what they called an ordinance of the Lords and Commons, without consulting the King, who was then at war against his rebels. And from this period the church continued under persecution, until monarchy was restored in the year 1660.

In a year or two after, we began to hear of a new party risen, and growing in the Parliament as well as the army, under the name of Independent: it spread indeed somewhat more in the latter, but not equal with the Presbyterians, either in weight or number, until the very time the King was murdered.

When the King, who was then a prisoner in the Isle of Wight, had made his last concessions for a peace to the commissioners of the Parliament, who attended him there: upon their return to London, they reported his Majesty's answer to the House: whereupon a number of moderate members, who, as Ludlow says, had secured their own terms with that prince, managed with so much art, as to obtain a majority, in a thin house, for passing a vote, that the King's concessions were a ground for future settlement. But the great officers of the army, joining with the discontented members, came to a resolution of excluding all those who had consented to that vote; which they executed in a military way. Ireton told Fairfax the General, a rigid Presbyterian, of this resolution; who thereupon issued his orders for drawing out the army the next morning, and placing guards in Westminster-hall, the Court of Requests, and the lobby; who, in obedience to the General, in conjunction with those members who opposed the vote, would let no member enter the House, except those of their own party. Upon which, the question for bringing the King to justice was immediately put, and carried without opposition that I can find. Then an order was made for his trial; the time and place appointed; the judges named, of whom Fairfax himself was one; although, by the advice or threats of his wife, he declined sitting among them. However, by fresh orders under his own hand, which I have seen in print, he appointed guards to attend the judges at the trial, and to keep the city in quiet; as he did likewise to prevent any opposition from the people, upon the day of execution.

From what I have already deduced, it appears manifest, that the differences between those two sects, Presbyterian and Independent, did not then

amount to half so much as what there is between a Whig and Tory at present among us. The design of utterly extirpating monarchy and episcopacy was equally the same in both; evidently the consequence of the very same principles, upon which the Presbyterians alone began, continued, and would have ended in the same events; if, toward the conclusion, they had not been bearded by that new party with whom they could not agree about dividing the spoil. However, they held a good share of civil and military employments during the whole time of the usurpation; and their names, actions, and preferments, are frequent in the accounts of those times. For I make no doubt, that all the prudent Presbyterians complied in proper seasons, falling in with the stream; and thereby got that share in employments, which many of them held to the Restoration; and perhaps too many of them after. In the same manner, we find our wisest Tories in both kingdoms, upon the change of hands and measures at the Queen's death, have endeavoured for several years, by due compliances, to recover the time they had lost by a temporary obstinacy; wherein they have well succeeded, according to their degrees of merit; of whose names I could here make honourable mention, if I did not fear it might offend their modesty. As to what is alleged, that some of the Presbyterians declared openly against the King's murder, I allow it to be true. But from what motives? No other can possibly be assigned, than perfect spite, rage, and envy, to find themselves wormed out of all power by a new infant spawn of Independents, sprung from their own bowels. It is true, the differences in religious tenets between them are very few and trifling; the chief quarrel, as far as I remember, relating to congregational and national assemblies. But whatever interest or power thinks fit to interfere, it little imports what

principles the opposite parties think fit to charge upon each other: for we see at this day, that the Tories are more hated by the whole set of zealous Whigs than the very Papists themselves: and in effect as much unqualified for the smallest office: although both these parties assert themselves to be of the same religion, in all its branches of doctrine and discipline; and profess the same loyalty to the same Protestant King and his heirs.

If the reader would know what became of this Independent party, upon whom all the mischief is charged by their Presbyterian brethren, he may please to observe, that during the whole usurpation, they contended by degrees with their parent sect, and, as I have already said, shared in employments, and gradually, after the Restoration, mingled with the mass of Presbyterians; lying ever since undistinguished in the herd of dissenters.

The Presbyterian merit is of as little weight, when they allege themselves instrumental toward the King's restoration. The kingdom grew tired with those ridiculous models of government: first, by a House of Lords and Commons without a king; then, without bishops; afterward by a rump* and lords temporal! then, by a rump alone; next, by a single person for life, in conjunction with a council; by agitators; by major-generals; by a new kind of representatives from the three kingdoms; by the keepers of the liberties of England; with other schemes that have slipped out of my memory. Cromwell was dead; his son, Richard, a weak, ignorant wretch, who gave up his monarchy much in the same manner with the two usurping kings of

* This name was given to that part of the House of Commons which remained after the moderate men had been expelled by military force.

Brentford ;* the people harassed with taxes and other oppressions. The King's party, then called the Cavaliers, began to recover their spirits. The few nobility scattered through the kingdom, who lived in a most retired manner, observing the confusion of things, could no longer endure to be ridden by bakers, cobblers, brewers, and the like, at the head of armies, and plundering everywhere like French dragoons. The rump assembly grew despicable to those who had raised them : the city of London, exhausted by almost twenty years' contributing to their own ruin, declared against them. The rump, after many deaths and resurrections, was, in the most contemptuous manner, kicked out, and burned in effigy : the excluded members were let in ; a free Parliament called, in as legal a manner as the times would allow ; and the King restored.

The second claim of Presbyterian merit is founded upon their services against the dangerous designs of King James the Second, while that prince was using all his endeavours to introduce Popery, which he openly professed upon his coming to the crown : to this they add their eminent services at the Revolution, under the Prince of Orange.

Now, the quantum of Presbyterian merit during the four years' reign of that weak, bigotted, and ill-advised prince, as well as at the time of the Revolution, will easily be computed, by a recourse to a great number of histories, pamphlets, and public papers, printed in those times, and some afterward ; beside the verbal testimonies of many persons yet alive, who are old enough to have known and observed the dissenters' conduct in that critical period.

It is agreed, that upon King Charles the Second's

* In the Rehearsal.

death, soon after his successor had publicly owned himself a Roman Catholic, he began with his first caresses to the church party; from whom having received very cold, discouraging answers, he applied to the Presbyterian leaders and teachers; being advised by the priests and Popish courtiers, that the safest method toward introducing his own religion would be, by taking off the Sacramental Test, and giving a full liberty of conscience to all religions, I suppose, that professed Christianity. It seems that the Presbyterians, in the latter years of King Charles the Second, upon account of certain plots, (allowed by Bishop Burnet to be genuine,) had been for a short time forbidden to hold their conventicles: whereupon these charitable Christians, out of perfect resentment against the church, received the gracious offers of King James, with the strongest professions of loyalty, and highest acknowledgments for his favour. I have seen several of their addresses, full of thanks and praises, with bitter insinuations of what they had suffered; putting themselves and the Papists upon the same foot, as fellow-sufferers for conscience; and with the style of our brethren the Roman Catholics. About this time began the project of closeting, which has since been practised many times with more art and success, where the principal gentlemen of the kingdom were privately catechised by his Majesty, to know whether, if a new parliament were called, they would agree to pass an act for repealing the Sacramental Test, and establishing a general liberty of conscience. But he received so little encouragement, that, despairing of success, he had recourse to his dispensing power, which the judges had determined to be part of his prerogative. By colour of this determination, he preferred several Presbyterians, and many Papists, to civil and military employments. While the king

was thus busied, it is well known that Monsieur Fagel, the Dutch envoy in London, delivered the opinion of the Prince and Princess of Orange concerning the repeal of the Test; whereof the king had sent an account to their highnesses, to know how far they approved of it. The substance of their answer, as reported by Fagel, was this—"That their highnesses thought very well of a liberty of conscience; but by no means of giving employments to any other persons than those who were of the national church." This opinion was confirmed by several reasons: I cannot be more particular, not having the paper by me, although it has been printed in many accounts of those times. And thus much every moderate churchman would perhaps submit to: but to trust any part of the civil power in the hands of those whose interest, inclination, conscience, and former practices, have been wholly turned to introduce a different system of religion and government, has very few examples in any Christian state; nor any at all in Holland, the great patroness of universal toleration.

Upon the first intelligence King James received of an intended invasion by the Prince of Orange, among great numbers of Papists, to increase his troops, he gave commissions to several Presbyterians; some of whom had been officers under the rump; and particularly he placed one Richards, a noted Presbyterian, at the head of a regiment, who had been governor of Wexford in Cromwell's time, and is often mentioned by Ludlow in his Memoirs. This regiment was raised in England against the Prince of Orange: the colonel made his son a captain, whom I knew, and who was as zealous a Presbyterian as his father. However, at the time of the prince's landing, the father, easily foreseeing how things would go, went over, like

many others, to the prince, who continued him in his regiment; but coming over a year or two after, to assist in raising the siege of Derry, he behaved himself so like either a coward or a traitor, that his regiment was taken from him.

I will now consider the conduct of the church party, during the whole reign of that unfortunate king. They were so unanimous against promising to pass an act for repealing the Test, and establishing a general liberty of conscience, that the king durst not trust a parliament; but, encouraged by the professions of loyalty given him by his Presbyterian friends, went on with his dispensing power.

The church clergy, at that time, are allowed to have written the best collection of tracts, against Popery, that ever appeared in England; which are to this day in the highest esteem. But, upon the strictest inquiry, I could never hear of above one or two papers published by the Presbyterians at that time upon the same subject. Seven great prelates (he of Canterbury among the rest) were sent to the Tower for presenting a petition, wherein they desired to be excused in not obeying an illegal command from the King. The Bishop of London, Dr. Compton, was summoned to answer before the commissioners for ecclesiastical affairs, for not suspending Dr. Sharp (afterward Archbishop of York) by the King's command. If the Presbyterians expressed the same zeal upon any occasion, the instances of it are not, as I can find, left upon record, or transmitted by tradition. The proceedings against Magdalen College in Oxford, for refusing to comply with the King's mandate for admitting a professed Papist upon their foundation, are a standing proof of the courage and firmness in religion shewn by that learned society, to the ruin of their fortunes. The Presbyterians know very well, that

I could produce many more instances of the same kind. But these are enough in so short a paper as I intend at present.

It is indeed very true, that after King William was settled on the English throne, the Presbyterians began to appear, and offer their credentials, and demand favour: and the new King, having been originally bred a Calvinist, was desirous enough to make them easy (if that would do it) by a legal toleration; although in his heart he never bore much affection to that sect; nor designed to favour them farther than it stood with the present scheme of politics; as I have long since been assured by the greatest men of Whig principles at that time in England.

It is likewise true, nor will it be denied, that when the King was possessed of the English crown, and the remainder of the quarrel was left to be decided in this kingdom; the Presbyterians wisely chose to join with the Protestant army, rather than with that of King James their old friend, whose affairs were then in a manner desperate. They were wise enough to know, that this kingdom, divided against itself, could never prevail against the united power of England. They fought *pro aris et focis;* for their estates and religion; which latter will never suffer so much by the church of England as by that of Rome, where they are counted heretics as well as we: and consequently they have no other game to play. But what merit they can build upon having joined with a Protestant army, under a King they acknowledged, to defend their own liberties and properties against a Popish enemy, under an abdicated King, is, I confess, to me absolutely inconceivable; and I believe will equally be so for ever to any reasonable man.

When these sectaries were several years ago making the same attempt for abolishing the Test, many

groundless reports were industriously and seasonably spread, of an invasion threatened by the Pretender on the north of Ireland. At which time, the Presbyterians, in their pamphlets, argued in a menacing manner, that if the Pretender should invade those parts of the kingdom, where the numbers and estates of dissenters chiefly lay, they would sit still, and let us fight our own battles; since they were to reap no advantage, whichever side should be victors. If this were the course they intended to take in such a case, I should desire to know, how they could contrive safely to stand neuters, otherwise than by a compact with the Pretender and his army, to support their neutrality, and protect them against the forces of the Crown? This is a necessary supposition; because they must otherwise have inevitably been a prey to both. However, by this frank declaration, they sufficiently shewed their good-will, and confirmed the common charge laid at their door, that a Scottish or northern Presbyterian hates our Episcopal established church more than Popery itself. And the reason for this hatred is natural enough; because it is the church alone that stands in the way between them and power, which Popery does not.

Upon this occasion, I am in some doubt whether the political spreaders of those chimerical invasions, made a judicious choice, in fixing the northern parts of Ireland for that romantic enterprise. Nor can I well understand the wisdom of the Presbyterians, in countenancing and confirming those reports; because it seems to cast a most infamous reflection upon the loyalty and religious principles of their whole body: for, if there had been any truth in the matter, the consequence must have been allowed, that the Pretender counted upon more assistance from his father's friends the Presbyterians, by choosing to land in those very parts where their number, wealth, and

power, most prevailed, rather than among those of his own religion. And therefore, in charity to this sect, I rather incline to believe, that those reports of an invasion were formed and spread by the race of small politicians, in order to do a seasonable job.

As to Popery in general, which for a thousand years past has been introducing and multiplying corruption both in doctrine and discipline; I look upon it to be the most absurd system of Christianity professed by any nation. But I cannot apprehend this kingdom to be in much danger from it. The estates of Papists are very few, crumbling into small parcels, and daily diminishing; their common people are sunk in poverty, ignorance, and cowardice, and of as little consequence as women and children. Their nobility and gentry are at least one-half ruined, banished, or converted: they all soundly feel the smart of what they suffered in the last Irish war; some of them are already retired into foreign countries; others, as I am told, intend to follow them; and the rest, I believe, to a man, who still possess any lands, are absolutely determined never to hazard them again, for the sake of establishing their superstition. If it had been thought fit, as some observe, to abate of the law's rigour against Popery in this kingdom, I am confident it was done for very wise reasons, considering the situation of affairs abroad at different times, and the interest of the Protestant religion in general. And as I do not find the least fault in this proceeding, so I do not conceive, why a sunk discarded party, who neither expect nor desire anything more than a quiet life, should, under the names of highflyers, Jacobites, and many other vile appellations, be charged so often, in print and at common tables, with endeavouring to introduce Popery and the Pretender; while the Papists abhor them above all other men, on account of severities

against their priests in her late Majesty's reign, when the now disbanded reprobate party was in power. This I was convinced of some years ago by a long journey into the southern parts; where I had the curiosity to send for many priests of the parishes I passed through, and to my great satisfaction found them everywhere abounding in professions of loyalty to the late King George; for which they gave me the reasons above-mentioned; at the same time complaining bitterly of the hardships they suffered under the Queen's last ministry.

I return from this digression to the modest demands of the Presbyterians for a repeal of the Sacramental Test, as a reward for their merits at the Restoration and the Revolution; which merits I have fairly represented, as well as my memory would allow me. If I have committed any mistakes, they must be of little moment. The facts and principal circumstances are what I have obtained and digested from reading the histories of those times written by each party; and many thousands have done the same as well as I, who I am sure have in their minds drawn the same conclusions.

This is the faction, and these the men, who are now resuming their applications, and giving in their bills of merit to both kingdoms, upon two points, which, of all others, they have the least pretensions to offer. I have collected the facts, with all possible impartiality, from the current histories of those times; and have shewn, although very briefly, the gradual proceedings of those sectaries, under the denomination of Puritans, Presbyterians, and Independents, for about the space of an hundred and eighty years, from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth to this present time. But, notwithstanding all that can be said, these very schismatics (for such they are in temporals as well as spirituals) are now again ex-

pecting, soliciting, and demanding, (not without insinuating threats, according to their custom,) that the Parliament should fix them upon an equal foot with the church established. I would fain know to what branch of the legislature they can have the forehead to apply. Not to my lords the bishops, who must have often read how the predecessors of this very faction, acting upon the same principles, drove the whole bench out of the house, who were then, and hitherto continue, one of the three estates: not to the temporal peers, the second of the three estates, who must have heard, that, immediately after those rebellious fanatics had murdered their king, they voted a House of Lords to be useless and dangerous, and would let them sit no longer, otherwise than when elected as commoners: not to the House of Commons, who must have heard that, in those fanatic times, the Presbyterian and Independent commanders in the army by military power expelled all the moderate men out of the house, and left a Rump to govern the nation; lastly, not to the Crown, which those very saints, destined to rule the earth, trampled under their feet, and then in cold blood murdered the blessed wearer.

But, the session now approaching, and a clan of dissenting teachers being come up to town from their northern head-quarters, accompanied by many of their elders and agents, and supported by a general contribution, to solicit their establishment, with a capacity of holding all military as well as civil employments, I think it high time that this paper should see the light. However, I cannot conclude without freely confessing, that if the Presbyterians should obtain their ends, I could not be sorry to find them mistaken in the point which they have most at heart by the repeal of the Test, I mean, the benefit of employments. For, after all, what assurance can a

Scottish northern disssenter born on Irish ground have, that he shall be treated with as much favour as a true Scot born beyond the Tweed?

I am ready enough to believe, that all I have said will avail but little. I have the common excuse of other men, when I think myself bound by all religious and civil ties to discharge my conscience, and to warn my countrymen upon this important occasion. It is true, the advocates for this scheme promise a new world after this blessed work shall be completed; that all animosity and faction must immediately drop; that the only distinction in this kingdom will then be of Papist and Protestant: for, as to Whig and Tory, High Church, and Low Church, Jacobite and Hanoverian, court and country party, English and Irish interests, Dissenters and Conformists, New Light and Old Light, Anabaptist and Independent, Quaker and Muggletonian: they will all meet and jumble together into a perfect harmony, at the sessions and assizes on the bench and in the revenues; and, upon the whole, in all civil and military trusts, not excepting the great councils of the nation. For it is wisely argued thus: that a kingdom being no more than a larger knot of friends met together, it is against the rules of good manners to shut any person out of the company, except the Papists, who profess themselves of another club.

I am at a loss to know, what arts the Presbyterian sect intends to use, in convincing the world of their loyalty to kingly government, which, (long before the prevalence, or even the birth, of their Independent rivals,) as soon as the King's forces were overcome, declared their principles to be against monarchy, as well as Episcopacy and the House of Lords, even until the King was restored: at which event, although they were forced to submit to the present power, yet

I have not heard that they ever, to this day, renounce any one principle by which their predecessors then acted; yet this they have been challenged to do, or at least to show that others have done it for them, by a certain doctor,* who, as I am told, has much employed his pen in the like disputes. I own they will be ready enough to insinuate themselves into any government; but if they mean to be honest and upright, they will and must endeavour, by all means which they shall think lawful, to introduce and establish their own scheme of religion, as nearest approaching to the word of God, by casting out all superstitious ceremonies, ecclesiastical titles, habits, distinctions, and superiorities, as rags of Popery, in order to a thorough reformation; and as in charity bound to promote the salvation of their countrymen, wishing, with St. Paul, that the whole kingdom were as they are. But what assurance will they please to give, that when their sect shall become the national established worship, they will treat Us Dissenters as we have treated them? Was this their course of proceeding during the dominion of the saints? Were not all the remainders of the Episcopal church in those days, especially the clergy, under a persecution for above a dozen years, equal to that of the primitive Christians under heathen emperors? That this proceeding was suitable to their principles, is known enough; for many of their preachers then writ books against allowing any liberty of conscience in a religion different from their own; producing many arguments to prove that opinion, and among the rest one frequently insisted on, that allowing such a liberty would be to establish iniquity by a law.†

* Dr. Tisdal, in a tract entitled, "The Case of the Sacramental Test stated and argued."

† See many hundred quotations to prove this, in the treatise called, "Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence."

Many of these writings are yet to be seen, and I hear have been quoted by the doctor above mentioned.

As to their great objection of prostituting that holy institution, the blessed Sacrament, by way of a test before admittance into any employment; I ask, whether they would not be content to receive it after their own manner for the office of a judge, for that of a commissioner in the revenue, for a regiment of horse, or to be a lord justice? I believe they would scruple it as little as a long grace before and after dinner, which they can say without bending a knee; for, as I have been told, their manner of taking bread and wine in their conventicles is performed with little more solemnity than at their common meals. And, therefore, since they look upon our practice in receiving the elements to be idolatrous, they neither can nor ought in conscience to allow us that liberty, otherwise than by connivance and a bare toleration, like what is permitted to the Papists. But, lest we should offend them, I am ready to change this test for another; although I am afraid, that sanctified reason is by no means the point where the difficulty pinches, and is only offered by pretended churchmen; as if they could be content with our believing that the impiety and profanation of making the Sacrament a test were the only objection. I therefore propose that, before the present law be repealed, another may be enacted; that no man shall receive any employment, before he swears himself to be a true member of the church of Ireland, in doctrine and discipline, &c., and that he will never frequent or communicate with any other form of worship. It shall likewise be farther enacted, that whoever offends, &c., shall be fined five hundred pounds, imprisoned for a year and a day, and rendered incapable of all public trust for ever. Otherwise I do insist, that those pious, indul-

gent, external professors of our national religion, shall either give up that fallacious, hypocritical reason for taking off the Test, or freely confess that they desire to have a gate wide open for every sect, without any test at all, except that of swearing loyalty to the King; which, however, considering their principles with regard to monarchy yet unrenounced, might, if they would please to look deep enough into their own hearts, prove a more bitter test than any other that the law has yet invented.

For, from the first time that these sectaries appeared in the world, it has been always found, by their whole proceedings, that they professed an utter hatred to kingly government. I can recollect at present three civil establishments, where Calvinists, and some other reformers who rejected Episcopacy, possess the supreme power; and these are all republics: I mean Holland, Geneva, and the reformed Swiss cantons. I do not say this in diminution or disgrace to commonwealths; wherein I confess I have much altered many opinions under which I was educated, having been led by some observation, long experience, and a thorough detestation for the corruptions of mankind: insomuch that I am now justly liable to the censure of Hobbes, who complains, that the youth of England imbibe ill opinions from reading the histories of ancient Greece and Rome, those renowned scenes of liberty and every virtue.

But as to monarchs, who must be supposed well to study and understand their own interest; they will best consider, whether those people, who, in all their actions, preachings, and writings, have openly declared themselves against regal power, are to be safely placed in an equal degree of favour and trust with those who have been always found the truest and only friends to the English establishment.

From which consideration, I could have added one more article to my new test, if I had thought it worth my time.

I have been assured, by some persons who were present, that several of these dissenting teachers, upon their first arrival hither to solicit the repeal of the Test, were pleased to express their gratitude by publicly drinking the healths of certain eminent patrons, whom they pretend to have found among us. If this be true, and that the Test must be delivered up by the very superiors appointed to defend it, the affair is already, in effect, at an end. What secret reasons those patrons may have given for such a return of brotherly love, I shall not inquire: "For, O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." *

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* Upon this text, as applicable to the conduct of the Presbyterians during the great Civil War, the Dean preached a sermon.

THE ADVANTAGES

PROPOSED BY

REPEALING THE SACRAMENTAL TEST,

IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED. 1732.

WHOEVER writes impartially upon this subject, must do it not only as a mere secular man, but as one who is altogether indifferent to any particular system of Christianity. And I think, in whatever country that religion predominates, there is one certain form of worship and ceremony, which is looked upon as the established; and, consequently, only the priests of that particular form are maintained at the public charge; and all civil employments bestowed among those who comply (at least outwardly) with the same establishment.

This method is strictly observed, even by our neighbours the Dutch, who are confessed to allow the fullest liberty of conscience of any Christian state, and yet are never known to admit any persons into civil offices, who do not conform to the legal worship. As to their military men, they are indeed not so scrupulous; being, by the nature of their government, under a necessity of hiring

foreign troops of whatever religious denomination, upon every great emergency, and maintaining no small number in time of peace.

This caution, therefore, of making one established faith, seems to be universal, and founded upon the strongest reasons; the mistaken or affected zeal of obstinacy and enthusiasm having produced such a number of horrible destructive events throughout all Christendom. For, whoever begins to think the national worship is wrong in any important article of practice or belief, will, if he be serious, naturally have a zeal to make as many proselytes as he can: and a nation may possibly have a hundred different sects with their leaders; every one of which has an equal right to plead, that they must "obey God rather than man;" must "cry aloud and spare not;" must "lift up their voice like a trumpet."

This was the very case of England during the fanatic times. And against all this there seems to be no defence, but that of supporting one established form of doctrine and discipline; leaving the rest to a bare liberty of conscience, but without any maintenance or encouragement from the public.

Wherever this national religion grows so corrupt, or is thought to do so by a very great majority of landed people joined to the governing party, whether prince or senate, or both, it ought to be changed, provided the work may be done without blood or confusion. Yet, whenever such a change shall be made, some other establishments must succeed, although for the worse; allowing all deviations, that would break the union, to be only tolerated. In this sense, those who affirm that every law, which is contrary to the law of God, is void in itself, seem to be mistaken; for many laws in Popish kingdoms and states, many more among the Turks, and perhaps not a few in other countries, are directly against

the divine laws; and yet, God knows, are very far from being void in the executive part.

Thus, for instance, if the three estates of Parliament in England (whereof the lords spiritual, who represent the church, are one) should agree and obtain the royal assent to abolish episcopacy, together with the liturgy, and the whole frame of the English church, as burdensome, dangerous, and contrary to Holy Scripture; and that Presbytery, Anabaptism, Quakerism, Independency, Muggletonianism, Brownism, Familism, or any other subdivided sect among us, should be established in its place: without question, all peaceable subjects ought passively to submit, and the predominant sect must become the religion established; the public maintaining no other teachers, nor admitting any persons of a different religious profession into civil offices, at least if their intention be to preserve the nation in peace.

Supposing then that the present system of religion were abolished; and Presbytery, which I find stands the fairest, with its synods and classes, and all its forms and ceremonies, essential or circumstantial, were erected into the national worship; their teachers, and no others, could have any legal claim to be supported at the public charge, whether by stipends or tithes; and only the rest of the same faith to be capable of civil employments.

If there be any true reasoning in what I have laid down, it should seem, that the project now in agitation for repealing the Test Act, and yet leaving the name of an establishment to the present national church, is altogether inconsistent; and may admit of consequences, which those who are the most indifferent to any religion at all, are possibly not aware of.

I presume, whenever the Test shall be repealed,

which obliges all men, who enter into office under the Crown, to receive the sacrament according to the rites of the church of Ireland; the way to employments will immediately be left open to all dissenters (except Papists,) whose consciences can suffer them to take the common oaths in such cases prescribed; after which, they are qualified to fill any lay station in this kingdom, from that of chief governor to an exciseman.

Thus, of the three judges on each bench, the first may be a Presbyterian, the second a Free-will Baptist, and the third a Churchman; the Lord Chancellor may be an Independent; the revenues may be managed by seven commissioners of as many different sects; and the like of all other employments; not to mention the strong probability, that the lawfulness of taking oaths may be revealed to the Quakers, who then will stand upon as good a foot for preferment as any other loyal subjects. It is obvious to imagine, that under such a motley administration of affairs, what a clashing there will be of interest and inclinations; what pullings and haulings backward and forward; what a zeal and bias in each religionist, to advance his own tribe, and depress the others. For I suppose nothing will be readier granted, than that how indifferent soever most men are in faith and morals, yet, whether out of artifice, natural complexion, or love of contradiction, none are more obstinate in maintaining their own opinions, and worrying all who differ from them, than those who publicly shew the least sense either of religion or common honesty.

As to the latter, Bishop Burnet tells us, that the Presbyterians, in the fanatic times, professed themselves to be above morality; which, as we find in some of their writings, was numbered among the beggarly elements: and accordingly at this day, no

scruples of conscience, with regard to conformity, are, in any trade or calling, inconsistent with the greatest fraud, oppressions, perjury, or any other vice.

This brings to my memory a passage in Montaigne, of a common prostitute, who, in the storming of a town, when a soldier came up to her chamber and offered violence to her chastity, rather chose to venture her neck by leaping out of the window, than suffer a rape; yet still continued her trade of lewdness, while she had any customers left.

I confess, that, in my private judgment, an unlimited permission of all sects whatsoever, (except Papists,) to enjoy employments, would be less pernicious to the public than a fair struggle between two contenders; because, in the former case, such a jumble of principles might possibly have the effect of contrary poisons mingled together, which a strong constitution might perhaps be able for some time to survive.

But, however, I shall take the other and more probable supposition, that this battle for employments is to be fought only between the Presbyterians, and those of the church yet established. I shall not enter into the merits of either side, by examining which of the two is the better spiritual economy, or which is most suited to our civil constitution: but the question turns upon this point; when the Presbyterians shall have got their share of employments, (which must be one full half, or else they cannot look upon themselves as fairly dealt with,) I ask, whether they ought not, by their own principles, and by the strictest rules of conscience, to use the utmost of their skill, power, and influence, in order to reduce the whole kingdom to an uniformity in religion, both as to doctrine and discipline, most agreeable to the word of God. Wherein if

they can succeed without blood, (as under the present disposition of things it is very possible they may,) it is to be hoped they will at last be satisfied; only I would warn them of a few difficulties. The first is, of compromising among themselves, that important controversy about the Old Light and the New; which otherwise may, after this establishment, split them as wide as Papist and Protestant, Whig and Tory, or Churchman and Dissenter; and consequently the work will be to begin again: for, in religious quarrels, it is of little moment how few or small the differences are; especially when the dispute is only about power. Thus, the zealous Presbyterians of the north are more alienated from the established clergy than from the Romish priests; taxing the former with idolatrous worship, as disguised Papists, ceremony-mongers, and many other terms of art; and this for a very powerful reason; because the clergy stand in their way, which the Popish priests do not. Thus, I am assured, that the quarrel between Old and New Light men is managed with more rage and rancour than any other dispute of the highest importance; and this, because it serves to lessen or increase their several congregations, from whom they receive their contributions.

Another difficulty, which may embarrass the Presbyterians after their establishment, will be, how to adjust their claim of the kirk's independency on the civil power, with the constitution of this monarchy? a point so delicate, that it has often filled the heads of great patriots with dangerous notions of the church-clergy without the least ground of suspicion.

As to the Presbyterians allowing liberty of conscience to those Episcopal principles, when their own kirk shall be predominant; the writers are so universally agreed in the negative, as well as their

practice during Oliver's reign, that I believe no reasonable Churchman (who must then be dissenter) will expect it.

I shall here take notice, that in the division of employments among the Presbyterians, after this approaching repeal of the Test Act, supposing them in proper time to have an equal share, the odds will be three or four to one on their side, in any farther scheme they have toward making their religion national. For I reckon all those gentlemen sent over from England, whatever religion they profess, or have been educated in, to be of that party; since it is no mark of prudence for any persons to oppose the current of a nation, where they are in some sort only sojourners; unless they have it in direction.

If there be any maxim in politics not to be controlled, it must be the following: that those, whose private interest is united with the interest of their country, supposing them to be of equal understanding with the rest of their neighbours, will heartily wish that the nation should thrive. Out of these are indubitably excepted, all persons who are sent from another kingdom to be employed in places of profit or power; because they cannot possibly bear any affection to the place where they sojourn, even for life; their sole business being to advance themselves, by following the advice of their principals. I except likewise those persons who are taken into office, although natives of the land; because they are greater gainers, while they keep their offices, than they could possibly be, by mending the miserable condition of their country.

I except, thirdly, all hopers, who, by balancing accounts with themselves, turn the scale on the same side; because the strong expectation of a good certain salary will outweigh the loss by bad rents, received out of the lands in moneyless times.

If my lords the bishops, who I hear are now employed in a scheme for regulating the conduct and maintenance of the inferior clergy, shall, in their wisdom, and piety, and love of the church, consent to this repeal of the Test, I have not the least doubt that the whole reverend body will cheerfully submit to their spiritual fathers; of whose paternal tenderness for their welfare they have found so many amazing instances.

I am not, therefore, under the least concern about the clergy on this account. They will (for some time) be no great sufferers by this repeal; because I cannot recollect, among all our sects, any one that gives latitude enough to take the oaths required at an institution to a church-living: and until that bar shall be removed, the present Episcopal clergy are safe for two years. Although it may be thought somewhat unequal, that in the northern parts, where there may be three Dissenters to one Churchman, the whole revenue shall be engrossed by him who has so small a part of the cure.

It is true indeed, that this disadvantage, which the Dissenters at present lie under, of a disability to receive church-preferments, will be easily remedied by the repeal of the Test. For, the dissenting teachers are under no incapacity of accepting civil and military employments; wherein they agree perfectly with the Popish clergy; among whom, great cardinals and prelates have been commanders of armies, chief ministers, knights of many orders, ambassadors, secretaries of state, and in most high offices under the Crown; although they assert the indelible character, which no sectaries among us did ever assume. But that many, both Presbyterians and Independents, commanders as well as private soldiers, were professed teachers in the time of their dominion, is allowed by all. Cromwell

himself was a preacher; and has left us one of his sermons in print, exactly in the same style and manner with those of our modern Presbyterian teachers; so was Colonel Howard, Sir George Downing, and several others, whose names are on record. I can therefore see no reason why a painful Presbyterian teacher, as soon as the Test shall be repealed, may not be privileged to hold, along with the spiritual office and stipend, a commission in the army or the civil list, *in commendam:* for, as I take it, the church of England is the only body of Christians which in effect disqualifies those who are employed to preach its doctrine, from sharing in the civil power, farther than as senators; yet this was a privilege begun in times of Popery, many hundred years before the Reformation, and woven with the very institution of our limited monarchy.

There is indeed another method, whereby the stipends of dissenting teachers may be raised, and the farmer much relieved; if it should be thought proper to reward a people so deserving, and so loyal by their principles. Every bishop, upon the vacancy of a church-living, can sequester the profits for the use of the next incumbent. Upon a lapse of half a year, the donation falls to the archbishop, and after a full year to the Crown, during pleasure. Therefore it would be no hardship for any clergyman alive, if (in those parts of Ireland where the number of sectaries much exceeds that of the conformists) the profits when sequestered, might be applied to the support of the dissenting teacher, who has so many souls to take care of: whereby the poor tenants would be much relieved in those hard times, and in a better condition to pay their rents.

But there is another difficulty in this matter, against which a remedy does not so readily occur. For, supposing the Test Act repealed, and the Dis-

senters, in consequence, fully qualified for all secular employments; the question may still be put, whether those of Ireland will be often the persons on whom they shall be bestowed; because it is imagined there may be another seminary * in view, more numerous, and more needy, as well as more meriting, and more easily contented with such low offices; which some nearer neighbours hardly think it worth stirring from their chimney-sides to obtain. And I am told, it is the common practice of those who are skilled in the management of bees, that when they see a foreign swarm at some distance, approaching with an intention to plunder their hives, these artists have a trick to divert them into some neighbouring apiary, there to make what havoc they please. This I should not have hinted, if I had not known it already to have gotten ground in many suspecting heads: for it is the peculiar talent of this nation to see dangers afar off; to all which I can only say, that our native Presbyterians must, by pains and industry, raise such a fund of merit as will answer to a birth six degrees more to the north. If they cannot arrive at this perfection, as several of the established church have compassed by indefatigable pains, I do not well see how their affairs will much mend by repealing the Test: for, to be qualified by law to accept an employment, and yet to be disqualified in fact, as it will much increase the mortification, so it will withdraw the pity of many among their well-wishers, and utterly deprive them of that merit they have so long made, of being a loyal, true, Protestant people, persecuted only for religion.

If this happen to be their case, they must wait maturity of time, until they can, by prudent gentle steps, make their faith become the religion estab-

* Scotland.

lished in the nation; after which, I do not in the least doubt that they will take most effectual methods to secure their power, against those who must then be Dissenters in their turn; whereof, if we may form a future opinion from present times, and the dispositions of Dissenters, who love to make a thorough reformation, the number and qualities will be very inconsiderable.

Thus I have with the utmost sincerity, after long thinking, given my judgment upon this arduous affair; but with the utmost deference and submission to public wisdom and power.

QUERIES

RELATING TO THE SACRAMENTAL TEST,

1732.

Query,

WHETHER hatred and violence between parties in a state, be not more inflamed by different views of interest, than by the greater or lesser differences between them, either in religion or government?

Whether it be any part of the question at this time, which of the two religions is worse, Popery or Fanaticism; or not rather which of the two (having both the same good-will) is in the hopefullest condition to ruin the church?

Whether the sectaries, whenever they come to prevail, will not ruin the church as infallibly and effectually as the Papists?

Whether the prevailing sectaries could allow liberty of conscience to Dissenters, without belying all their former practice, and almost all their former writings?

Whether many hundred thousand Scotch Pres-

byterians are not fully as virulent against the Episcopal Church, as they are against the Papists; or as they would have us think the Papists are against them?

Whether the Dutch, who are most distinguished for allowing liberty of conscience, do ever admit any persons, who profess a different scheme of worship from their own, into civil employments, although they may be forced by the nature of their government to receive mercenary troops of all religions?

Whether the Dissenters ever pretended, until of late years, to desire more than a bare toleration?

Whether, if it be true, what a sorry pamphleteer asserts, who lately writ for repealing the Test, that the Dissenters in this kingdom are equally numerous with the Churchmen, it would not be a necessary point of prudence, by all proper and lawful means, to prevent their farther increase?

The great argument given, by those whom they call Low-Churchmen, to justify the large tolerations allowed to Dissenters, has been; that by such indulgences, the rancour of those sectaries would gradually wear off, many of them would come over to us, and their parties, in a little time, crumble to nothing.

Query, Whether, if what the above pamphleteer asserts, that the sectaries are equal in number with conformists, be true, it does not clearly follow, that those repeated tolerations have operated directly contrary to what those Low-Church politicians pretended to foresee and expect?

Whether any clergyman, however dignified or distinguished, if he think his own profession most agreeable to Holy Scripture and the primitive church, can really wish in his heart, that all sectaries should be upon an equal foot with the

Churchmen, in the point of civil power and employments?

Whether Episcopacy, which is held by the church to be a divine and apostolical institution, be not a fundamental point of religion, particularly in that essential one of conferring holy orders?

Whether, by necessary consequences, the several expedients among the sectaries to constitute their teachers, are not absolutely null and void?

Whether the sectaries will ever agree to accept ordination only from bishops?

Whether the bishops and clergy will be content to give up Episcopacy, as a point indifferent, without which the Church can well subsist?

Whether that great tenderness toward sectaries, which now so much prevails, be chiefly owing to the fears of Popery, or to that spirit of atheism, deism, scepticism, and universal immorality, which all good men so much lament?

Granting Popery to have many more errors in religion than any one branch of the sectaries, let us examine the actions of both, as they have each affected the peace of these kingdoms, with allowance for the short time which the sectaries had to act in, who are in a manner but of yesterday. The Papists, in the time of King James the Second, used all endeavours to establish their superstition, wherein they failed by the united power of English Church Protestants, with the Prince of Orange's assistance. But it cannot be asserted, that these bigotted Papists had the least design to oppose or murder their King, much less to abolish kingly government; nor was it their interest or inclination to attempt either.

On the other side, the Puritans, who had almost from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign been a perpetual thorn in the Church's side, joining with

the Scotch enthusiasts, in the time of King Charles the First, were the principal cause of the Irish rebellion and massacre, by distressing that Prince, and making it impossible for him to send over timely succours. And after that Prince had satisfied his Parliament in every single point to be complained of, the same sectaries, by poisoning the minds and affections of the people, with the most false and wicked representations of their King, were able, in the compass of a few years, to embroil the three nations in a bloody rebellion, at the expense of many thousand lives; to turn the kingly power into anarchy; to murder their Prince in the face of the world; and (in their own style) to destroy the church root and branch.

The account therefore stands thus. The Papists aimed at one pernicious act, which was to destroy the Protestant religion; wherein by God's mercy, and the assistance of our glorious King William, they absolutely failed. The sectaries attempted the three most infernal actions that could possibly enter into the hearts of men forsaken by God; which were the murder of a most pious King, the destruction of the monarchy, and the extirpation of the church; and succeeded in them all.

Upon which I put the following queries; Whether any of those sectaries have ever yet, in a solemn public manner, renounced any one of those principles upon which their predecessors then acted?

Whether, considering the cruel persecutions of the Episcopal Church during the course of that horrid rebellion, and the consequences of it until the happy Restoration, it is not manifest, that the persecuting spirit lies so equally divided between the Papists and the sectaries, that a feather would turn the balance on either side?

And therefore, lastly, Whether any person of common understanding, who professes himself a member of the church established, although perhaps with little inward regard to any religion, (which is too often the case,) if he loves the peace and welfare of his country, can, after cool thinking, rejoice to see a power placed again in his hands of so restless, so ambitious, and so merciless a faction, to act over all the same parts a second time?

Whether the candour of that expression, so frequent of late in sermons and pamphlets, of the strength and number of the Papists in Ireland, can be justified? for as to their number, however great, it is always magnified in proportion to the zeal or politics of the speaker or writer: but it is a gross imposition upon common reason, to terrify us with their strength. For Popery, under the circumstances it lies in this kingdom, although it be offensive and inconvenient enough from the consequences it has to increase the rapine, sloth, and ignorance, as well as poverty of the natives, is not properly dangerous in that sense, as some would have us take it; because it is universally hated by every party of a different religious profession. It is the contempt of the wise: the best topic for clamours of designing men; but the real terror only of fools. The landed Popish interest in England far exceeds that among us, even in proportion to the wealth and extent of each kingdom. The little that remains here is daily dropping into Protestant hands, by purchase or descent; and that affected complaint of counterfeit converts, will fall with the cause of it in half a generation, unless it be raised or kept alive as a continual fund of merit and eloquence. The Papists are wholly disarmed: they have neither courage, leaders, money, nor inclinations to rebel: they want every

advantage which they formerly possessed, to follow their trade; and wherein, even with those advantages, they always miscarried: they appear very easy and satisfied under that connivance which they enjoyed during the whole last reign; nor even scrupled to reproach another party, under which they pretend to have suffered so much severity.

Upon these considerations, I must confess to have suspended much of my pity toward the great dreaders of Popery, many of whom appear to be hale, strong, active young men, who, as I am told, eat, drink, and sleep heartily; and are very cheerful (as they have exceeding good reason) upon all other subjects. However, I cannot too much commend the generous concern which our neighbours, and others who come from the same neighbourhood, are so kind to express for us upon this account, although the former be farther removed from the danger of Popery, by twenty leagues of salt water; but this, I fear, is a digression.

When an artificial report was raised here many years ago, of an intended invasion by the Pretender, (which blew over after it had done its office,) the Dissenters argued, in their talk and in their pamphlets, after this manner, applying themselves to those of the church:—"Gentlemen, if the Pretender had landed, as the law now stands, we durst not assist you; and therefore, unless you take off the Test, whenever you shall happen to be invaded in earnest, if we are desired to take up arms in your defence, our answer shall be, Pray, gentlemen, fight your own battles; we will lie by quietly; conquer your enemies by yourselves, if you can: we will not do your drudgery." This way of reasoning I have heard from several of their chiefs and abettors, in a hundred conversations; and have read it in twenty

pamphlets: and I am confident it will be offered again, if the project should fail to take off the Test.

Upon which piece of oratory and reasoning I form the following query: Whether, in case of an invasion from the Pretender, (which is not quite so probable as from the Grand Signior,) the Dissenters can, with prudence and safety, offer the same plea, except they shall have made a previous stipulation with the invaders? And whether the full freedom of their religion and trade, their lives, properties, wives and children, are not, and have not always been, reckoned sufficient motives for repelling invasion, especially in our sectaries, who call themselves the truest Protestants, by virtue of their pretended or real fierceness against Popery?

Whether omitting or neglecting to celebrate the day of the martyrdom of the blessed King Charles the First, enjoined by act of Parliament, can be justly reckoned a particular and distinguishing mark of good affection to the present government?

Whether, in those churches where the said day is observed, it will fully answer the intent of the said act, if the preacher shall commend, excuse, palliate, or extenuate the murder of that royal Martyr, and place the guilt of that horrid rebellion, with all its consequences, the following usurpations, the entire destruction of the church, the cruel and continual persecutions of those who could be discovered to profess its doctrines with the ensuing Babel of fanaticism, to the account of that blessed king; who, by granting the petition of right, and passing every bill that could be asked for the security of the subject, had, by the confession of those wicked men before the war began, left them nothing more to demand?

Whether such a preacher as I have named,

(whereof there have been more than one, not many years past, even in the presence of viceroys,) who takes that course as a means for promotion, may not be thought to step a little out of the common road, in a monarchy, where the descendants of that most blessed Martyr have reigned to this day ?

I ground the reason of making these queries on the title of the act; to which I refer the reader.

SOME FEW THOUGHTS

CONCERNING THE REPEAL OF THE TEST.

—o—

THOSE of either side who have written upon this subject of the Test, in making or answering objections, seem to fail, by not pressing sufficiently the chief point upon which the controversy turns. The arguments used by those who write for the church are very good in their kind; but will have little force under the present corruptions of mankind, because the authors treat this subject *tanquam in republicâ Platonis, et non in fæce Romuli.*

It must be confessed, that, considering how few employments of any consequence fall to the share of those English who are born in this kingdom, and those few very dearly purchased, at the expense of conscience, liberty, and all regard for the public good, they are not worth contending for; and if nothing but profit were in the case, it would hardly cost me one sigh, when I should see those few scraps thrown among every species of fanatics, to scuffle for among themselves.

And this will infallibly be the case, after repealing the Test. For every subdivision of sect will, with

equal justice, pretend to have a share; and, as it is usual with sharers, will never think they have enough, while any pretender is left unprovided. I shall not except the Quakers; because, when the passage is once let open for sects to partake in public emoluments, it is very probable the lawfulness of taking oaths, and wearing carnal weapons,* may be revealed to the brotherhood: which thought, I confess, was first put into my head by one of the shrewdest Quakers in this kingdom.†

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* The Quakers were more likely to admit this relaxation of their peculiar tenets, as, upon their first appearance as a sect, they did not by any means profess the principle of non-resistance, which they afterwards adopted.

† The Quaker hinted at by Dr. Swift was Mr. George Rooke, a linen-draper. In a letter to Mr. Pope, Aug. 30, 1716, Dr. Swift says, "There is a young ingenious Quaker in this town, who writes verses to his mistress, not very correct, but in a strain purely what a poetical Quaker should do, commending her look and habit, &c. It gave me a hint, that a set of Quaker pastorals might succeed, if our friend Gay would fancy it; and I think it a fruitful subject: pray hear what he says."—Accordingly Gay wrote "The Espousal, a sober Eclogue, between two of the people called Quakers."

OBSERVATIONS

ON

HEYLIN'S HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIANS.*

THIS book, by some errors and neglects in the style, seems not to have received the author's last correction.† It is written with some vehemence, very pardonable in one who had been an observer and a sufferer, in England, under that diabolical fanatic sect, which then destroyed church and state. But by comparing, in my memory, what I have read in other histories, he neither aggravates nor falsifies any facts. His partiality appears chiefly in setting the actions of Calvinists in the strongest light, without equally dwelling on those of the other side; which, however, to say the truth, was not his proper business. And yet he might have spent some more words on the inhuman massacre of Paris, and other parts of France, which no provocation (and yet the

* Written by the Dean in the beginning of the book, on one of the blank leaves.

† It was published in 1670.

king had the greatest possible) could excuse or much extenuate. The author, according to the current opinion of the age he lived in, had too high notions of regal power; led by the common mistake of the term Supreme Magistrate, and not rightly distinguishing between the legislature and the administration, into which mistake the clergy fell or continued in the reign of Charles II., as I have shewn and explained in a treatise, &c.

J. SWIFT.

March 6, 1727–8.

REASONS,

HUMBLY OFFERED TO THE PARLIAMENT OF IRELAND,

FOR REPEALING THE SACRAMENTAL TEST, IN FAVOUR OF THE CATHOLICS,

OTHERWISE CALLED ROMAN CATHOLICS, AND, BY THEIR ILL-WILLERS, PAPISTS.

DRAWN PARTLY FROM ARGUMENTS AS THEY ARE CATHOLICS, AND PARTLY FROM ARGUMENTS COMMON TO THEM WITH THEIR BRETHREN THE DISSENTERS. 1733.

—o—

IT is well known, that the first conquerors of this kingdom were English Catholics, subjects to English Catholic kings, from whom, by their valour and success, they obtained large portions of land, given them as a reward for their many victories over the Irish; to which merit our brethren the Dissenters, of any denomination whatsoever, have not the least pretension.

It is confessed, that the posterity of those first victorious Catholics were often forced to rise in their own defence against new colonies from England, who treated them like mere native Irish, with innumerable oppressions, depriving them of their lands, and driving them by force of arms into the most desolate parts of the kingdom; till, in the next generation, the children of these tyrants were used in the same manner by new English adventurers; which practice continued for many centuries. But it is agreed on all hands, that no insurrections were ever made, except after great oppressions by fresh invaders: whereas all the rebellions of Puritans, Presbyterians, Independents, and other sectaries, constantly began before any provocations were given, except that they were not suffered to change the government in church and state, and seize both into their own hands; which, however, at last they did, with the murder of their King, and of many thousands of his best subjects.

The Catholics were always defenders of monarchy, as constituted in these kingdoms; whereas, our brethren the Dissenters were always republicans, both in principle and practice.

It is well known that all the Catholics of these kingdoms, both priests and laity, are true Whigs, in the best and most proper sense of the word: bearing as well in their hearts as in their outward profession, an entire loyalty to the royal house of Hanover, in the person and posterity of George II., against the Pretender and all his adherents; to which they think themselves bound in gratitude, as well as conscience, by the lenity wherewith they have been treated since the death of Queen Anne, so different from what they suffered in the four last years of that Princess, during the administration of that wicked minister the Earl of Oxford.

The Catholics of this kingdom humbly hope, that they have at least as fair a title, as any of their brother Dissenters, to the appellation of Protestants. They have always protested against the selling, dethroning, or murdering their Kings; against the usurpations and avarice of the court of Rome; against Deism, Atheism, Socinianism, Quakerism, Muggletonianism, Fanaticism, Brownism, as well as against all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics. Whereas the title of Protestants, assumed by the whole herd of Dissenters, (except ourselves,) depends entirely upon their protesting against archbishops, bishops, deans, and chapters, with their revenues, and the whole hierarchy; which are the very expressions used in the Solemn League and Covenant * where the word Popery is only mentioned *ad invidiam;* because the Catholics agree with the Episcopal church in those fundamentals.

Although the Catholics cannot deny, that in the great rebellion against King Charles I., more soldiers of their religion were in the Parliament army than in his Majesty's troops: and that many jesuits and friars went about, in the disguise of Presbyterian and Independent ministers, to preach up rebellion, as the best historians of those times inform us; yet the bulk of Catholics in both kingdoms preserved their loyalty entire.

The Catholics have some reason to think it a little hard, when their enemies will not please to distinguish between the rebellious riot committed by that brutal ruffian Sir Phelim O'Neal, with his

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* The Solemn League and Covenant, in the rebellion against King Charles I., 1643; of which it was a principal object, "to endeavour the extirpation of prelacy, that is, church government by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and all other Episcopal officers depending on that hierarchy."

tumultuous crew of rabble, and the forces raised afterward by the Catholic lords and gentlemen of the English pale, in defence of the King, after the English rebellion began. It is well known that his Majesty's affairs were in great distraction some time before, by an invasion of the covenanting Scottish kirk rebels, and by the base terms the King was forced to accept, that they might be kept in quiet, at a juncture when he was every hour threatened at home by that fanatic party, which soon after set all in a flame. And if the Catholic army in Ireland fought for their King, against the forces sent over by the Parliament, then in actual rebellion against him, what person of loyal principles can be so partial as to deny that they did their duty by joining with the Marquis of Ormond and other commanders, who bore their commissions from the King? For which great numbers of them lost their lives and forfeited their estates; a great part of the latter being now possessed by many descendants from those very men, who had drawn their swords in the service of that rebellious Parliament, which cut off his head and destroyed monarchy. And what is more amazing, although the same persons, when the Irish were entirely subdued, continued in power under the Rump, were chief confidants and faithful subjects to Cromwell, yet, being wise enough to foresee a restoration, they seized the forts and castles here out of the hands of their brethren in rebellion, for the service of the King; just saving the tide, and putting in a stock of merit sufficient not only to preserve the land which the Catholics lost by their loyalty, but likewise to preserve their civil and military employments, or be higher advanced.

Those insurrections wherewith the Catholics are charged, from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the great English rebellion, were occa-

sioned by many oppressions they lay under.—They had no intention to introduce a new religion, but to enjoy the liberty of preserving the old; the very same which their ancestors professed from the time that Christianity was first introduced into this island, which was by Catholics; but whether mingled with corruptions, as some pretend, does not belong to the question. They had no design to change the government; they never attempted to fight against, to imprison, to betray, to sell, to bring to a trial, or to murder their King. The schismatics acted by a spirit directly contrary; they united in a Solemn League and Covenant to alter the whole system of spiritual government, established in all Christian nations, and of apostolic institution; concluding the tragedy with the murder of the King, in cold blood, and upon mature deliberation; at the same time changing the monarchy into a commonwealth.

The Catholics of Ireland, in the great rebellion, lost their estates for fighting in defence of their King. The schismatics, who cut off the father's head, forced the son to fly for his life, and overturned the whole ancient frame of government, religious and civil; obtained grants of those very estates which the Catholics lost in defence of the ancient constitution, many of which estates are at this day possessed by the posterity of those schismatics: and thus they gained by their rebellion what the Catholics lost by their loyalty.

We allow the Catholics to be brethren of the Dissenters; some people indeed (which we cannot allow) would have them to be our children, because we both dissent from the Church established, and both agree in abolishing this persecuting Sacramental Test: by which negative discouragement, we are both rendered incapable of civil and military employments. However, we cannot but wonder at

the bold familiarity of these schismatics, in calling the members of the national church their brethren and fellow Protestants. It is true that all these sects (except the Catholics) are brethren to each other in faction, ignorance, iniquity, perverseness, pride, and (if we except the Quakers) in rebellion. But how the churchmen can be styled their fellow Protestants, we cannot comprehend: because, when the whole Babel of sectaries joined against the Church, the King, and the nobility, for twenty years, in a match at football, where the proverb expressly tells us that all are fellows; while the three kingdoms were tossed to and fro, the churches, and cities, and royal palaces, shattered to pieces by their balls, their buffets, and their kicks; the victors would allow no more fellows at football: but murdered, sequestered, plundered, deprived, banished to the plantations, or enslaved all their opposers, who had lost the game.

It is said the world is governed by opinion; and politicians assure us that all power is founded thereupon. Wherefore, as all human creatures are fond to distraction of their own opinions, and so much the more as those opinions are absurd, ridiculous, or of little moment, it must follow, that they are equally fond of power. But no opinions are maintained with so much obstinacy as those in religion, especially by such zealots, who never bore the least regard to religion, conscience, honour, justice, truth, mercy, or common morality, farther than in outward appearance, under the mask of hypocrisy, to promote their diabolical designs. And therefore Bishop Burnet, one of their oracles, tells us honestly, that the saints of those fanatic times pronounced themselves above morality, which they reckoned among beggarly elements; but the meaning of these two last words, thus applied, we confess to be above our understanding.

Among those kingdoms and states which first embraced the Reformation, England appears to have received it in the most regular way; where it was introduced in a peaceable manner, by the supreme power of a King * and the three estates in Parliament; to which, as the highest legislative authority, all subjects are bound passively to submit. Neither was there much blood shed on so great a change of religion. But a considerable number of lords, and other persons of quality, through the kingdom, still continued in their old faith, and were, notwithstanding their difference in religion, employed in offices civil as well as military, more or less, in every reign, until the Test Act in the time of King Charles II. However, from the time of the Reformation, the number of Catholics gradually and considerably lessened. So that in the reign of King Charles I., England became in a great degree a Protestant kingdom, without taking the sectaries into the number; the legality whereof, with respect to human laws, the Catholics never disputed; but the Puritans, and other schismatics, without the least pretence to any such authority, by an open rebellion destroyed that legal Reformation, as we observed before, murdered their King, and changed the monarchy into a republic. It is therefore not to be wondered at, if the Catholics, in such a Babel of religions, chose to adhere to their own faith left them by their ancestors, rather than seek for a better among a rabble of hypocritical, rebellious, deluding knaves, or deluded enthusiasts.

We repeat once more, that if a national religion be changed by the supreme legislative power, we cannot dispute the human legality of such a change. But we humbly conceive, that if any considerable

* Henry VIII.

party of men, which differs from an establishment either old or new, can deserve liberty of conscience, it ought to consist of those, who, for want of conviction, or of right understanding the merits of each cause, conceive themselves bound in conscience to adhere to the religion of their ancestors; because they are, of all others, least likely to be authors of innovations, either in church or state.

On the other side; if the reformation of religion be founded upon rebellion against the King, without whose consent, by the nature of our constitution, no law can pass; if this reformation be introduced by only one of the three estates, I mean the commons, and not by one half even of those commons, and this by the assistance of a rebellious army; again, if this reformation were carried on by the exclusion of nobles both lay and spiritual, (who constitute the other part of the three estates,) by the murder of their King, and by abolishing the whole system of government; the Catholics cannot see why the successors of those schismatics, who are universally accused by all parties, except themselves and a few infamous abettors, for still retaining the same principles in religion and government under which their predecessors acted, should pretend to a better share of civil or military trust, profit, and power, than the Catholics; who, during all that period of twenty years, were continually persecuted with the utmost severity, merely on account of their loyalty and constant adherence to kingly power.

We now come to those arguments for repealing the Sacramental Test, which equally affect the Catholics and their brethren the Dissenters.

First, we agree with our fellow Dissenters, that persecution merely for conscience' sake, is against the genius of the gospel. And so likewise is any law for depriving men of their natural and civil

rights, which they claim as men. We are also ready enough to allow, that the smallest negative discouragements for uniformity's sake, are so many persecutions; because it cannot be denied, that the scratch of a pin is in some degree a real wound, as much as a stab through the heart. In like manner, an incapacity by law for any man to be made a judge, a colonel, or justice of the peace, merely on a point of conscience, is a negative discouragement, and consequently a real persecution: for in this case, the author of the pamphlet quoted in the margin * puts a very pertinent and powerful question: "If God be the sole lord of the conscience, why should the rights of conscience be subject to human jurisdiction?" Now to apply this to the Catholics; the belief of transubstantiation is a matter purely of religion and conscience, which does not affect the political interest of society, as such: therefore, why should the rights of conscience, whereof God is the sole lord, be subject to human jurisdiction? And why should God be deprived of this right over a Catholic's conscience, any more than over that of any other Dissenter?

And whereas another author among our brethren the Dissenters, has very justly complained, that by this persecuting Test Act, great numbers of true Protestants have been forced to leave the kingdom, and fly to the plantations, rather than stay here, branded with an incapacity for civil and military employments; we do affirm, that the Catholics can bring many more instances of the same kind; some thousands of their religion have been forced by the Sacramental Test to retire into other countries, rather than live here under the incapacity of wearing swords, sitting in Parliament, and getting that

* Reasons for the Repealing of the Sacramental Test.

share of power and profit which belongs to them as fellow Christians, whereof they are deprived merely upon account of conscience, which would not allow them to take the sacrament after the manner prescribed in the liturgy. Hence it clearly follows, in the words of the same author,* "That if we Catholics are incapable of employment, we are punished for our dissent, that is, for our conscience, which wholly turns upon political considerations."

The Catholics are willing to acknowledge the King's supremacy, whenever their brethren the Dissenters shall please to shew them an example.

Farther, the Catholics, whenever their religion shall come to be the national established faith, are willing to undergo the same test offered by the author already quoted. His words are these: "To end this debate, by putting it upon a foot which I hope will appear to every impartial person a fair and equitable one, we Catholics propose, with submission to the proper judges, that effectual security be taken against persecution, by obliging all who are admitted into places of power and trust, whatever their religious profession be, in the most solemn manner to disclaim persecuting principles." It is hoped the public will take notice of these words, "Whatever their religious profession be;" which plainly include the Catholics; and for which we return thanks to our dissenting brethren.

And whereas it is objected by those of the established church, that if the schismatics and fanatics were once put into a capacity of possessing civil and military employments, they would never be at ease, till they had raised their own way of worship into the national religion, through all his Majesty's dominions, equal with the true orthodox Scottish

* See Reasons against the Test.

kirk; which when they had once brought to pass, they would no more allow liberty of conscience to Episcopal Dissenters, than they did in the time of the great English rebellion, and in the succeeding fanatic anarchy, till the King was restored: there is another very learned schismatical pamphleteer,* who, in answer to a malignant libel, called *The Presbyterian Plea of Merit, &c.*, clearly wipes off this aspersion, by assuring all Episcopal Protestants of the present church, upon his own word, and to his knowledge, that our brethren the Dissenters will never offer at such an attempt. In like manner, the Catholics, when legally required, will openly declare, upon their words and honours, that as soon as their negative discouragements and their persecution shall be removed, by repealing the Sacramental Test, they will leave it entirely to the merit of the cause, whether the kingdom shall think fit to make their faith the established religion or not.

And again, whereas our Presbyterian brethren, in many of their pamphlets, take much offence, that the great rebellion in England, the murder of the King, with the entire change of religion and government, are perpetually objected against them, both in and out of season, by our common enemy, the present conformists; we do declare, in the defence of our said brethren, that the reproach aforesaid is an old, worn-out, threadbare cant, which they always disdained to answer: and I very well remember, that having once told a certain conformist, how much I wondered to hear him and his tribe dwelling perpetually on so beaten a subject, he was pleased to divert the discourse with a foolish story, which I cannot forbear telling to his disgrace. He said, there was a clergyman in Yorkshire, who, for

* Vindication of the Protestant Dissenters.

fifteen years together, preached every Sunday against drunkenness: whereat the parishioners being much offended, complained to the archbishop; who, having sent for the clergyman, and severely reprimanded him, the minister had no better an answer than by confessing the fact; adding, that all the parish were drunkards; that he desired to reclaim them from one vice before he would begin upon another; and since they still continued to be as great drunkards as before, he resolved to go on, except his grace would please to forbid him.

We are very sensible how heavy an accusation lies upon the Catholics of Ireland; that some years before King Charles II. was restored, when theirs and the King's forces were entirely reduced, and the kingdom declared by the Rump to be settled; after all his Majesty's generals were forced to fly to France, or other countries, the heads of the said Catholics, who remained here in an enslaved condition, joined to send an invitation to the Duke of Lorrain; engaging, upon his appearing here with his forces, to deliver up the whole island to his power, and declare him their sovereign; which, after the Restoration, was proved against them by Dean Boyle, since primate, who produced the very original instrument at the board. The Catholics freely acknowledge the fact to be true; and at the same time appeal to all the world, whether a wiser, a better, a more honourable, or a more justifiable project, could have been thought of. They were then reduced to slavery and beggary by the English rebels, many thousands of them murdered, the rest deprived of their estates, and driven to live on a small pittance in the wilds of Connaught; at a time when either the Rump, or Cromwell, absolutely governed the three kingdoms. And the question will turn upon this, whether the Catholics, deprived

of all their possessions, governed with a rod of iron, and in utter despair of ever seeing the monarchy restored, for the preservation of which they had suffered so much, were to be blamed for calling in a foreign prince of their own religion, who had a considerable army to support them, rather than submit so infamous a usurper as Cromwell, or such a bloody and ignominious conventicle as the Rump. And I have often heard not only our friends the Dissenters, but even our common enemies the Conformists, who are conversant in the history of those times, freely confess that, considering the miserable situation the Irish were then in, they could not have thought of a braver or more virtuous attempt; by which they might have been instruments of restoring the lawful monarch, at least to the recovery of England and Scotland, from those betrayers, and sellers, and murderers of his royal father.

To conclude: whereas the last quoted author complains very heavily and frequently of a brand that lies upon them, it is a great mistake: for the first original brand has been long taken off; only we confess the scar will probably remain, and be visible for ever to those who know the principles by which they acted, and until those principles shall be openly renounced: else it must continue to all generations, like the mark set upon Cain, which some authors say descended to all his posterity; or like the Roman nose and Austrian lip, or like the long bag of flesh hanging down from the gills of the people in Piedmont. But as for any brands fixed on schismatics for several years past, they have been all made with cold iron; like thieves, who by the benefit of the clergy are condemned to be only burned in the hand; but escaped the pain and the mark by being in fee with the jailor. Which advantage the schismatical teachers will

never want, who, as we are assured, and of which there is a very fresh instance, have the souls and bodies and purses of the people an hundred times more at their mercy than the Catholic priests could ever pretend to.

Therefore upon the whole, the Catholics do humbly petition (without the least insinuation of threatening) that upon this favourable juncture, their incapacity for civil and military employments may be wholly taken off, for the very same reasons (besides others more cogent) that are now offered by their brethren the Dissenters.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray, &c.*

Dublin, Nov. 1733.

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* In this controversy the author was again victorious, for the Test was not repealed.

ESSAYS,

PERIODICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS.

PREDICTIONS

FOR

THE YEAR 1708.

WHEREIN THE MONTH, AND THE DAY OF THE MONTH, ARE SET DOWN, THE PERSONS NAMED, AND THE GREAT ACTIONS AND EVENTS OF NEXT YEAR PARTICULARLY RELATED, AS THEY WILL COME TO PASS. WRITTEN TO PREVENT THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND FROM BEING FARTHER IMPOSED ON BY THE VULGAR ALMANACK-MAKERS.

By ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq.

Every age has its appropriate follies; and one by which the opening of the eighteenth century was peculiarly marked, was the general credit given to the predictions of almanack-makers, or, as they chose more learnedly to design themselves, Philomaths. In the seventeenth century this character had been assumed by men, whose learning ought to have placed them above such scandalous imposition; and believed in by others, whose unquestioned talents renders their credulity almost miraculous. Among the latter we may rank Dryden, and among the former Ashmole and Lilly. Even the sceptical Sir Thomas Brown, while he denies the capacity of astrologers, does not venture to dispute the reality of the science.

"Nor do we hereby reject a sober and regulated astrology; we hold there is more truth therein than in astrologers; in some more than many allow, yet in none so much as some pretend. We deny not the influence of the stars, but often suspect the due application thereof; for though we should affirm that all things were in all things; that heaven were but earth celestified, and earth but heaven terrestrified, or that each part above had an influence upon its divided affinity below; yet how to single out these relations, and duly to apply their actions, is a work ofttimes to be effected by some revelation and cabala from above, rather than any philosophy or speculation here below."—BROWN'S *Vulgar Errors*, Book iv. p. 195, edit. 2, 1650.

The art, however, about 1708, was gradually passing into contempt, and its professors, although their lucubrations continued to interest the community at large, had only impudence and cant to sustain their stately pretensions to vaticination. The solemn, ambiguous, and authoritative style assumed by these astrologers, afforded an ample fund for the exercise of Swift's irony, who has imitated, with exquisite dexterity, the mysterious style of their annual predictions.

It is said that his choice of Isaac Bickerstaff, a name since so well known, was owing to his finding the surname upon a locksmith's sign.

The predictions are placed before the Periodical Essays, because they gave rise to the Tatler, to which Swift made frequent contributions.

HAVE considered the gross abuse of astrology in this kingdom, and upon debating the matter with myself, I could not possibly lay the fault upon the art, but upon those gross impostors, who set up to be the artists. I know several learned men have contended, that the whole is a cheat; that it is absurd and ridiculous to imagine the stars can have any influence at all upon human actions, thoughts, or inclinations; and whoever has not bent his studies that way may be excused for thinking so, when he sees in how wretched a manner that noble art is treated by a few mean, illiterate traders between us

and the stars: who import a yearly stock of nonsense, lies, folly, and impertinence, which they offer to the world as genuine from the planets, though they descend from no greater a height than their own brains.

I intend, in a short time, to publish a large and rational defence of this art, and therefore shall say no more in its justification at present, than that it has been in all ages defended by many learned men, and among the rest by Socrates himself; whom I look upon as undoubtedly the wisest of uninspired mortals: to which if we add, that those who have condemned this art, though otherwise learned, have been such as either did not apply their studies this way, or at least did not succeed in their applications, their testimony will not be of much weight to its disadvantage, since they are liable to the common objection, of condemning what they did not understand.

Nor am I at all offended, or do I think it an injury to the art, when I see the common dealers in it, the students in astrology, the philomaths, and the rest of that tribe, treated by wise men with the utmost scorn and contempt; but I rather wonder, when I observe gentlemen in the country, rich enough to serve the nation in Parliament, poring in Partridge's Almanack, to find out the events of the year, at home and abroad: not daring to propose a hunting match, till Gadbury * or he have fixed the weather.

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* John Gadbury, bred a tailor, but an *Oxford* tailor, long published an Almanack, which vied in reputation with that of Partridge, who, being a mean *London* shoemaker, could hardly be supposed to possess equal science. He made it up, however, in effrontery; and this shoemaker and tailor found partisans, who ranked in their separate factions; while they disputed each other's claims to prophetical accuracy, and to knowledge of the hidden influence of the celestial bodies.

I will allow either of the two I have mentioned, or any other of the fraternity, to be not only astrologers, but conjurors too, if I do not produce an hundred instances in all their Almanacks, to convince any reasonable man, that they do not so much as understand common grammar and syntax; that they are not able to spell any word out of the usual road, nor, even in their prefaces, to write common sense, or intelligible English. Then, for their observations and predictions, they are such as will equally suit any age or country in the world. "This month a certain great person will be threatened with death or sickness." This the newspapers will tell them; for there we find at the end of the year, that no month passes without the death of some person of note; and it would be hard, if it should be otherwise, when there are at least two thousand persons of note in this kingdom, many of them old, and the Almanack-maker has the liberty of choosing the sickliest season of the year, where he may fix his prediction. Again, "This month an eminent clergyman will be preferred;" of which there may be many hundreds, half of them with one foot in the grave. Then, "Such a planet in such a house shews great machinations, plots, and conspiracies, that may in time be brought to light:" after which, if we hear of any discovery, the astrologers gets the honour; if not, his predictions still stand good. And at last, "God preserve King William from all his open and secret enemies, Amen." When if the king should happen to have died, the astrologer plainly foretold it; otherwise it passes but for the pious ejaculation of a loyal subject: though it unluckily happened in some of their Almanacks, that poor King William was prayed for many months after he was dead, because it fell out that he died about the beginning of the year.

To mention no more of their impertinent predictions, what have we to do with their advertisements about "pills and drinks for the venereal disease?" or their mutual quarrels in verse and prose of Whig and Tory, wherewith the stars have little to do?

Having long observed and lamented these, and an hundred other abuses of this art too tedious to repeat, I resolved to proceed in a new way, which I doubt not will be to the general satisfaction of the kingdom: I can this year produce but a specimen of what I design for the future; having employed most part of my time in adjusting and correcting the calculations I made for some years past, because I would offer nothing to the world of which I am not as fully satisfied as that I am now alive. For these two last years I have not failed in above one or two particulars, and those of no very great moment. I exactly foretold the miscarriage at Toulon,* with all its particulars: and the loss of Admiral Shovel,† though I was mistaken as to the day, placing that article about thirty-six hours sooner than it happened; but upon reviewing my schemes, I quickly found the cause of that error. I likewise foretold the battle of Almanza‡ to the very day and hour, with the loss on both sides, and the consequences thereof. All which I shewed to some friends many months before they happened; that is, I gave them papers sealed up, to open at such a time, after which they were at liberty to read them; and there they found my predictions true in every article, except one or two very minute.

As for the few following predictions I now offer the

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* An attempt was made to besiege Toulon in 1707, by Prince Eugene and the Duke of Savoy, supported by the English fleet, under Sir Cloudesly Shovel, but it miscarried.

† Sir Cloudesly Shovel's fleet was wrecked Oct. 22, 1707.

‡ The battle of Almanza was fought April 25, 1707.

world, I forebore to publish them, till I had perused the several Almanacks for the year we are now entered upon. I found them all in the usual strain, and I beg the reader will compare their manner with mine: And here I make bold to tell the world, that I lay the whole credit of my art upon the truth of these predictions; and I will be content, that Partridge, and the rest of his clan, may hoot me for a cheat and impostor, if I fail in any single particular of moment. I believe, any man who reads this paper will look upon me to be at least a person of as much honesty and understanding, as a common maker of Almanacks. I do not lurk in the dark; I am not wholly unknown in the world; I have set my name at length to be a mark of infamy to mankind, if they shall find I deceive them.

In one thing I must desire to be forgiven, that I talk more sparingly of home affairs; as it would be imprudence to discover secrets of state, so it might be dangerous to my person; but in smaller matters, and such as are not of public consequence, I shall be very free: and the truth of my conjectures will as much appear from these as the other. As for the most signal events abroad in France, Flanders, Italy, and Spain, I shall make no scruple to predict them in plain terms: some of them are of importance, and I hope I shall seldom mistake the day they will happen; therefore I think good to inform the reader, that I shall all along make use of the old style observed in England, which I desire he will compare with that of the newspapers, at the time they relate the actions I mention.

I must add one word more; I know it has been the opinion of several learned persons, who think well enough of the true art of astrology, that the stars do only incline, and not force, the actions or wills of men; and therefore, however I may proceed

by right rules, yet I cannot in prudence so confidently assure the events will follow exactly as I predict them.

I hope I have maturely considered this objection, which in some cases is of no little weight. For example; a man may, by the influence of an overruling planet, be disposed or inclined to lust, rage, or avarice, and yet by the force of reason overcome that evil influence; and this was the case of Socrates; but the great events of the world, usually depending upon numbers of men, it cannot be expected they should all unite to cross their inclinations, for pursuing a general design, wherein they unanimously agree. Besides, the influence of the stars reaches to many actions and events, which are not anyway in the power of reason; as sickness, death, and what we commonly call accidents, with many more needless to repeat.

But now it is time to proceed to my predictions, which I have begun to calculate from the time that the sun enters into Aries. And this I take to be properly the beginning of the natural year. I pursue them to the time that he enters Libra, or somewhat more, which is the busy period of the year. The remainder I have not yet adjusted, upon account of several impediments needless here to mention: besides, I must remind the reader again, that this is but a specimen of what I design in succeeding years to treat more at large, if I may have liberty and encouragement.

My first prediction is but a trifle, yet I will mention it, to shew how ignorant those sottish pretenders to astrology are in their own concerns: it relates to Partridge the Almanack-maker. I have consulted the star of his nativity by my own rules, and find he will infallibly die upon the 29th of March next, about eleven at night, of a raging fever; therefore I

advise him to consider of it, and settle his affairs in time.

The month of April will be observable for the death of many great persons. On the 4th will die the Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris: on the 11th, the young Prince of Asturias, son to the Duke of Anjou: on the 14th, a great peer of this realm will die at his country-house: on the 19th, an old layman of great fame for learning: and on the 23d, an eminent goldsmith in Lombard-Street. I could mention others, both at home and abroad, if I did not consider such events of very little use or instruction to the reader, or to the world.

As to public affairs: on the 7th of this month there will be an insurrection in Dauphiné, occasioned by the oppressions of the people, which will not be quieted in some months.

On the 15th will be a violent storm on the south-east coast of France, which will destroy many of their ships, and some in the very harbour.

The 19th will be famous for the revolt of a whole province or kingdom, excepting one city, by which the affairs of a certain prince in the alliance will take a better face.

May, against common conjectures, will be no very busy month in Europe, but very signal for the death of the Dauphin, which will happen on the 7th, after a short fit of sickness, and grievous torments with the strangury. He dies less lamented by the court than the kingdom.

On the 9th, a Mareschal of France will break his leg by a fall from his horse. I have not been able to discover whether he will then die or not.

On the 11th will begin a most important siege, which the eyes of all Europe will be upon: I cannot be more particular; for, in relating affairs that so nearly concern the confederates, and consequently

this kingdom, I am forced to confine myself, for several reasons very obvious to the reader.

On the 15th, news will arrive of a very surprising event, than which nothing can be more unexpected.

On the 19th, three noble ladies of this kingdom will, against all expectation, prove with child, to the great joy of their husbands.

On the 23d, a famous buffoon of the playhouse will die a ridiculous death, suitable to his vocation.

June. This month will be distinguished at home by the utter dispersing of those ridiculous deluded enthusiasts, commonly called the Prophets;* occasioned chiefly by seeing the time come, when many of their prophecies should be fulfilled, and then finding themselves deceived by contrary events. It is indeed to be admired, how any deceiver can be so weak to foretell things near at hand, when a very few months must, of necessity, discover the imposture to all the world; in this point less prudent than common almanack-makers, who are so wise to wander in generals, and talk dubiously, and leave to the reader the business of interpreting.

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* The Protestants in Dauphiné, called Casimars, being driven mad by persecution, became of course enthusiasts, and mingled miracles and prophecies with their religious fervour. Those who took refuge in England attracted great attention under the title of the French prophets, and were subject of much discussion, both from the press and pulpit. In 1707–8, John Lacy, Esq., became a convert; and, in the preface to one of these nonsensical books, called "A Cry from the Desert," he confidently appeals to the "subject matter and economy of four or five hundred prophetic warnings, given under ecstacy in London." As impostors mingled among the enthusiasts, the consequences began to assume rather an alarming appearance. But they were rash enough to undertake to raise a man from the dead, and, having of course failed, were exposed to general ridicule, to which a play, called "The Modern Prophets," written by Durfy, not a little contributed.

On the 1st of this month, a French General will be killed by a random shot of a cannon-ball.

On the 6th, a fire will break out in the suburbs of Paris, which will destroy above a thousand houses; and seems to be the foreboding of what will happen, to the surprise of all Europe, about the end of the following month.

On the 10th, a great battle will be fought, which will begin at four of the clock in the afternoon, and last till nine at night, with great obstinacy, but no very decisive event. I shall not name the place, for the reasons aforesaid: but the commanders on each left wing will be killed. I see bonfires, and hear the noise of guns for a victory.

On the 14th, there will be a false report of the French King's death.

On the 20th, Cardinal Portocarero will die of a dysentery, with great suspicion of poison; but the report of his intention to revolt to King Charles will prove false.

July. The 6th of this month, a certain General will, by a glorious action, recover the reputation he lost by former misfortunes.

On the 12th, a great commander will die a prisoner in the hands of his enemies.

On the 14th, a shameful discovery will be made of a French jesuit, giving poison to a great foreign general; and when he is put to the torture, he will make wonderful discoveries.

In short, this will prove a month of great action, if I might have liberty to relate the particulars.

At home, the death of an old famous senator will happen on the 15th, at his country-house, worn out with age and diseases.

But that which will make this month memorable to all posterity, is the death of the French king, Louis the Fourteenth, after a week's sickness, at Marli,

which will happen on the 29th, about six o'clock in the evening. It seems to be an effect of the gout in the stomach, followed by a flux. And, in three days after, Monsieur Chamillard will follow his master, dying suddenly of an apoplexy.

In this month likewise an ambassador will die in London; but I cannot assign the day.

August. The affairs of France will seem so suffer no change for a while under the Duke of Burgundy's administration; but the genius that animated the whole machine being gone, will be the cause of mighty turns and revolutions in the following year. The new King makes yet little change either in the army or in the ministry; but the libels against his grandfather, that fly about his very court, give him uneasiness.

I see an express in mighty haste, with joy and wonder in his looks, arriving by break of day on the 26th of this month, having travelled in three days a prodigious journey by land and sea. In the evening I hear bells and guns, and see the blazing of a thousand bonfires.

A young admiral of noble birth does likewise this month gain immortal honour by a great achievement.

The affairs of Poland are this month entirely settled: Augustus resigns his pretensions, which he had again taken up for some time; Stanislaus is peaceably possessed of the throne; and the King of Sweden declares for the Emperor.

I cannot omit one particular accident here at home; that near the end of this month much mischief will be done at Bartholomew Fair, by the fall of a booth.

September. This month begins with a very surprising fit of frosty weather, which will last near twelve days.

The Pope having long languished last month, the

swellings in his legs breaking, and the flesh mortifying, will die on the 11th instant: and in three weeks time, after a mighty contest, be succeeded by a Cardinal of the imperial faction, but a native of Tuscany, who is now about sixty-one years old.

The French army now acts wholly on the defensive, strongly fortified in their trenches: and the young French King sends overtures for a treaty of peace by the Duke of Mantua, which, because it is a matter of state that concerns us here at home, I shall speak no farther of.

I shall add but one prediction more, and that in mystical terms, which shall be included in a verse out of Virgil—

> *Alter erit jam Tethys, et altera, quæ vehat, Argo,*
> *Delectos heroas.*

Upon the 25th day of this month, the fulfilling of this prediction will be manifest to everybody.

This is the farthest I have proceeded in my calculations for the present year. I do not pretend that these are all the great events which will happen in this period, but that those I have set down will infallibly come to pass. It will perhaps still be objected, why I have not spoke more particularly of affairs at home, or of the success of our armies abroad, which I might and could very largely have done; but those in power have wisely discouraged men from meddling in public concerns, and I was resolved by no means to give the least offence. This I will venture to say, that it will be a glorious campaign for the allies, wherein the English forces, both by sea and land, will have their full share of honour: that her Majesty Queen Anne will continue in health and prosperity: and that no ill accident will arrive to any in the chief ministry.

As to the particular events I have mentioned, the

reader may judge, by the fulfilling of them, whether I am on the level with common astrologers; who, with an old paltry cant, and a few pot-hooks for planets to amuse the vulgar, have, in my opinion, too long been suffered to abuse the world: but an honest physician ought not to be despised, because there are such things as mountebanks. I hope I have some share of reputation, which I would not willingly forfeit for a frolic or humour: and I believe no gentleman who reads this paper, will look upon it to be of the same cast or mould with the common scribbles that are every day hawked about. My fortune has placed me above the little regard of writing for a few pence, which I neither value or want: therefore let not wise men too hastily condemn this essay, intended for a good design, to cultivate and improve an ancient art, long in disgrace by having fallen into mean unskilful hands. A little time will determine whether I have deceived others or myself: and I think it no very unreasonable request, that men would please to suspend their judgments till then. I was once of the opinion with those who despise all predictions from the stars, till, in the year 1686, a man of quality shewed me, written in his *album*,* that the most learned astronomer, Captain Halley, assured him, he would never believe anything of the stars' influence, if there were not a great revolution in England in the year 1688. Since that time I began to have other thoughts, and after eighteen years' diligent study and application, I think I have no reason to repent of my pains. I shall detain the reader no longer than to let him

* *Album* is the name of a paper book, in which it was usual for a man's friends to write down a sentence, with their names, to keep them in his remembrance; it is still common in some of the foreign universities.

know, that the account I design to give of next year's events, shall take in the principal affairs that happen in Europe; and if I be denied the liberty of offering it to my own country, I shall appeal to the learned world, by publishing it in Latin, and giving order to have it printed in Holland.

AN ANSWER

TO

BICKERSTAFF.

SOME REFLECTIONS UPON MR. BICKERSTAFF'S PREDICTIONS FOR THE YEAR MDCCVIII.

BY A PERSON OF QUALITY.

I HAVE not observed, for some years past, any insignificant paper to have made more noise, or be more greedily bought, than that of these Predictions. They are the wonder of the common people, an amusement for the better sort, and a jest only to the wise; yet among these last, I have heard some very much in doubt, whether the author meant to deceive others, or is deceived himself. Whoever he was, he seems to have with great art adjusted his paper both to please the rabble, and to entertain persons of condition. The writer is, without question, a gentleman of [illegible] learning, although the piece seems hastily [illegible] in a sudden frolic, with the scornful thought [illegible] pleasure he will have, in

putting this great town into a wonderment about nothing: nor do I doubt but he, and his friends in the secret, laugh often and plentifully in a corner, to reflect how many hundred thousand fools they have already made. And he has them fast for some time: for so they are likely to continue until his prophecies begin to fail in the events. Nay, it is a great question whether the miscarriage of the two or three first will so entirely undeceive people, as to hinder them from expecting the accomplishment of the rest. I doubt not but some thousands of these papers are carefully preserved by as many persons, to confront with the events, and try whether the astrologer exactly keeps the day and hour. And these I take to be Mr. Bickerstaff's choicest cullies, for whose sake chiefly he writ his amusement. Meanwhile he has seven weeks good, during which time the world is to be kept in suspense: for it is so long before the almanack-maker is to die, which is the first prediction; and, if that fellow happens to be a splenetic visionary fop, or has any faith in his own art, the prophecy may punctually come to pass, by very natural means. As a gentleman of my acquaintance, who was ill used by a mercer in town, wrote him a letter in an unknown hand, to give him notice that care had been taken to convey a slow poison into his drink, which would infallibly kill him in a month: after which, the man began in earnest to languish and decay, by the mere strength of imagination, and would certainly have died, if care had not been taken to undeceive him, before the jest went too far. The like effect upon Partridge would wonderfully rise Mr. Bickerstaff's reputation for a fortnight longer, until we could hear from France, whether the Cardinal de Noailles were dead or alive upon the fourth of April, which is the second of his predictions.

For a piece so carelessly written, the observations upon astrology are reasonable and pertinent, the remarks just; and as the paper is partly designed, in my opinion, for a satire upon the credulity of the vulgar, and that idle itch of peeping into futurities; so it is no more than what we all of us deserve. And, since we must be teazed with perpetual hawkers of strange and wonderful things, I am glad to see a man of sense find leisure and humour to take up the trade for his own and our diversion. To speak in the town phrase, it is a bite; he has fully had his jest, and may be satisfied.

I very much approve the serious air he gives himself in his introduction and conclusion, which has gone far to give some people, of no mean rank, an opinion that the author believes himself. He tells us, "He places the whole credit of his art on the truth of these predictions, and will be content to be hooted by Partridge and the rest for a cheat, if he fails in any one particular;" with several other strains of the same kind, wherein I perfectly believe him; and that he is very indifferent whether Isaac Bickerstaff be a mark of infamy or not. But it seems, although he has joined an odd surname to no very common Christian one, that in this large town there is a man found to own both the names, although, I believe, not the paper.

I believe it is no small mortification to this gentleman astrologer, as well as his bookseller, to find their piece, which they sent out in a tolerable print and paper, immediately seized on by three or four interloping printers of Grub Street, the title stuffed with an abstract of the whole matter, together with the standard epithets of *strange* and *wonderful*, the price brought down a full half, which was but a penny in its prime, and bawled about by hawkers of the inferior class, with the concluding cadence of "a

halfpenny a piece." But *sic cecidit Phaeton;* and, to comfort him a little, this production of mine will have the same fate; to-morrow will my ears be grated by the little boys and wenches in straw hats; and I must a hundred times undergo the mortification to have my own work offered me to sale at an under value. Then, which is a great deal worse, my acquaintance in the coffeehouse will ask me whether I have seen the "Answer to 'Squire Bickerstaff's Predictions," and whether I knew the puppy that writ it; and how to keep a man's countenance in such a juncture, is no easy point of conduct. When, in this case, you see a man shy either in praising or condemning, ready to turn off the discourse to another subject, standing as little in the light as he can to hide his blushing, pretending to sneeze, or take snuff, or go off as if sudden business called him; then ply him close, observe his look narrowly, see whether his speech be constrained or affected, then charge him suddenly, or whisper and smile, and you will soon discover whether he be guilty. Although this seem not the purpose I am discoursing on, yet I think it to be so; for I am much deceived if I do not know the true author of Bickerstaff's Predictions, and did not meet with him some days ago in a coffeehouse at Covent Garden.

As to the matter of the Predictions themselves, I shall not enter upon the examination of them; but think it very incumbent upon the learned Mr. Partridge to take them into his consideration, and lay as many errors in astrology as possible to Mr. Bickerstaff's account. He may justly, I think, challenge the 'squire to publish the calculation he has made of Partridge's nativity, by the credit of which, he so determinately pronounces the time and manner of his death; and Mr. Bickerstaff can do no less, in honour, than give Mr. Partridge the same advantage

of calculating his, by sending him an account of the time and place of his birth, with other particulars necessary for such a work. By which, no doubt, the learned world will be engaged in the dispute, and take part on each side according as they are inclined.

I should likewise advise Mr. Partridge to inquire, why Mr. Bickerstaff does not so much as offer at one prediction to be fulfilled, until two months after the time of publishing his paper. This looks a little suspicious, as if he were desirous to keep the world in play as long as he decently could; else it were hard he could not afford us one prediction between this and the 29th of March; which is not so fair dealings as we have even from Mr. Partridge and his brethren, who give us their predictions (such as they are indeed) for every month in the year.

There is one passage in Mr. Bickerstaff's paper, that seems to be as high a strain of assurance as I have anywhere met with. It is that prediction for the month of June, which relates to the French prophets here in town; where he tells us, "They will utterly disperse, by seeing the time come, wherein their prophecies should be fulfilled, and then finding themselves deceived by contrary events." Upon which he adds, with great reason, "his wonder how any deceiver can be so weak, to foretell things near at hand, when a very few months must discover the imposture to all the world." This is spoken with a great deal of affected unconcernedness, as if he would have us think himself to be not under the least apprehension, that the same in two months will be his own case. With respect to the gentleman, I do not remember to have heard of so refined and pleasant a piece of impudence; which I hope the author will not resent as an uncivil word, because I am sure I enter into his taste, and take it as he

meant it. However, he half deserves a reprimand, for writing with so much scorn and contempt for the understandings of the majority.

For the month of July, he tells us, "of a General, who, by a glorious action, will recover the reputation he lost by former misfortunes." This is commonly understood to be Lord Galway; who, if he be already dead, as some newspapers have it, Mr. Bickerstaff has made a trip. But this I do not much insist on; for it is hard if another general cannot be found under the same circumstances, to whom this prediction may be as well applied.

The French King's death is very punctually related; but it was unfortunate to make him die at Marli, where he never goes at that season of the year, as I observed myself during three years I passed in that kingdom; and, discoursing some months ago with Monsieur Tallard, about the French court, I find that King never goes to Marli for any time, but about the season of hunting there, which is not till August. So that there was an unlucky slip of Mr. Bickerstaff, for want of foreign education.

He concludes with resuming his promise, of publishing entire predictions for next year; of which the other astrologers need not be in very much pain. I suppose we shall have them much about the same time with "The General History of Ears." I believe we have done with him for ever in this kind; and though I am no astrologer, may venture to prophesy, that Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire, is now dead, and died just at the time his Predictions were ready for the press: that he dropped out of the clouds about nine days ago, and, in about four hours after, mounted up thither again like a vapour; and will, one day or other, perhaps, descend a second time, when he has some new, agreeable, or amusing

whimsy to pass upon the town; wherein, it is very probable, he will succeed as often as he is disposed to try the experiment; that is as long as he can preserve a thorough contempt for his own time and other people's understandings, and is resolved not to laugh cheaper than at the expense of a million of people.

THE

ACCOMPLISHMENT

OF THE FIRST OF

MR. BICKERSTAFF'S PREDICTIONS,

BEING

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE DEATH OF

MR. PARTRIDGE, THE ALMANACK-MAKER,

UPON THE 29TH INSTANT,

IN A LETTER TO A PERSON OF HONOUR.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1708.

—o—

My Lord,

IN obedience to your Lordship's commands, as well as to satisfy my own curiosity, I have some days past inquired constantly after Partridge the almanack-maker, of whom it was foretold in Mr. Bickerstaff's Predictions, published about a month ago, that he should die the 29th instant, about eleven at night, of a raging fever. I had some sort of

knowledge of him, when I was employed in the revenue, because he used every year to present me with his almanack, as he did other gentlemen, upon the score of some little gratuity we gave him. I saw him accidentally once or twice, about ten days before he died, and observed he began very much to droop and languish, though, I hear, his friends did not seem to apprehend him in any danger. About two or three days ago he grew ill, was confined first to his chamber, and in a few hours after to his bed, where Dr. Case* and Mrs. Kirleus† were sent for to visit, and to prescribe to him. Upon this intelligence I sent thrice every day one servant or other to inquire after his health; and yesterday about four in the afternoon, word was brought me, "that he was past hopes:" upon which I prevailed with myself to go and see him, partly out of commiseration, and, I confess, partly out of curiosity. He knew me very well, seemed surprised at my condescension, and made me compliments upon it, as well as he could in the condition he was. The people about him said, "he had been for some time delirious;" but when I saw him he had his understanding as well as ever I knew, and spoke strong and hearty, without any seeming uneasiness or constraint. After I had told him "how sorry I was to see him in those melancholy circumstances,"

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* John Case was many years a noted practitioner in physic and astrology. He was looked upon as the successor of Lilly and of Saffold, and possessed the magical utensils of both. He erased the verses of his predecessor from the sign-post, and substituted in their stead this distich, by which he is said to have got more than Dryden did by all his works,

"Within this place
Lives Doctor Case."

† Mary Kirleus, widow of John Kirleus, son of Dr. Thomas Kirleus, a collegiate physician of London.

and said some other civilities suitable to the occasion, I desired him "to tell me freely and ingenuously, whether the predictions Mr. Bickerstaff had published relating to his death, had not too much affected and worked on his imagination." He confessed, "he had often had it in his head, but never with much apprehension, till about a fortnight before; since which time it had the perpetual possession of his mind and thoughts, and he did verily believe was the true natural cause of his present distemper: "for," said he, "I am thoroughly persuaded, and I think I have very good reasons, that Mr. Bickerstaff spoke altogether by guess, and knew no more what will happen this year than I did myself."

I told him, "his discourse surprised me; and I would be glad he were in a state of health to be able to tell me what reason he had to be convinced of Mr. Bickerstaff's ignorance." He replied, "I am a poor ignorant fellow, bred to a mean trade, yet I have sense enough to know, that all pretences of foretelling by astrology are deceits, for this manifest reason: because the wise and the learned, who can only judge whether there be any truth in this science, do all unanimously agree to laugh at and despise it; and none but the poor ignorant vulgar give it any credit, and that only upon the word of such silly wretches as I and my fellows who can hardly write or read." I then asked him, "why he had not calculated his own nativity, to see whether it agreed with Bickerstaff's prediction?" At which he shook his head, and said, "Oh! sir, this is no time for jesting, but for repenting those fooleries, as I do now from the very bottom of my heart."—"By what I can gather from you," said I, "the observations and predictions you printed with your almanacks, were mere impositions on the people." He replied, "If it were otherwise, I should have the less to answer

for. We have a common form for all those things: as to foretelling the weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the printer, who takes it out of any old almanack, as he thinks fit; the rest was my own invention, to make my almanack sell, having a wife to maintain, and no other way to get my bread; for mending old shoes is a poor livelihood; and," added he, sighing, "I wish I may not have done more mischief by my physic, than my astrology; though I had some good receipts from my grandmother, and my own compositions were such as I thought could at least do no hurt."

I had some other discourse with him, which I now cannot call to mind; and I fear have already tired your lordship. I shall only add one circumstance, that on his death-bed he declared himself a nonconformist, and had a fanatic preacher to be his spiritual guide. After half an hour's conversation I took my leave, being almost stifled with the closeness of the room. I imagined he could not hold out long, and therefore withdrew to a little coffeehouse hard by, leaving a servant at the house with orders to come immediately and tell me, as near as he could, the minute when Partridge should expire, which was not above two hours after; when looking upon my watch, I found it to be above five minutes after seven; by which it is clear that Mr. Bickerstaff was mistaken almost four hours in his calculation. In the other circumstances he was exact enough. But whether he has been the cause of this poor man's death, as well as the predictor, may be very reasonably disputed. However, it must be confessed, the matter is odd enough, whether we should endeavour to account for it by chance, or the effect of imagination: for my own part, though I believe no man has less faith in these matters, yet I shall wait with some impatience, and not without some expectation, the

fulfilling of Mr. Bickerstaff's second prediction, that the Cardinal de Noailles is to die upon the fourth of April; and if that should be verified as exactly as this of poor Partridge, I must own I should be wholly surprised, and at a loss, and should infallibly expect the accomplishment of all the rest.

SQUIRE BICKERSTAFF DETECTED:

OR, THE

ASTROLOGICAL IMPOSTOR CONVICTED.

BY

JOHN PARTRIDGE,

STUDENT IN PHYSIC AND ASTROLOGY.*

—o—

IT is hard, my dear countrymen of these united nations, it is very hard, that a Briton born, a Protestant astrologer, a man of revolution principles, an assertor of the liberty and property of the people, should cry out in vain for justice against a Frenchman, a Papist, and an illiterate pretender to science, that would blast my reputation, most inhumanly bury me alive, and defraud my native country of those services, which, in my double capacity, I daily offer the public.

* This piece being on the same subject, and the original of it very rare, we have thought fit to add it, though not written by the same hand. In the Dublin edition it is said to be written by the late N. Rowe, Esq., which is a mistake; for the Reverend Dr. Yalden, preacher of Bridewell, Mr. Partridge's near neighbour, drew it up for him.

What great provocations I have received, let the impartial reader judge, and how unwillingly, even in my own defence, I now enter the lists against falsehood, ignorance, and envy: but I am exasperated, at length, to drag out this Cacus from the den of obscurity where he lurks, detect him by the light of those stars he has so impudently traduced, and shew there is not a monster in the skies so pernicious and malevolent to mankind as an ignorant pretender to physic and astrology. I shall not directly fall on the many gross errors, nor expose the notorious absurdities of this prostitute libeller, till I have let the learned world fairly into the controversy depending, and then leave the unprejudiced to judge of the merits and justice of my cause.

It was toward the conclusion of the year 1707, when an impudent pamphlet crept into the world, entitled, *Predictions, &c., by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.* Among the many arrogant assertions laid down by that lying spirit of divination, he was pleased to pitch on the Cardinal de Noailles and myself, among many other eminent and illustrious persons, that were to die within the compass of the ensuing year; and peremptorily fixes the month, day, and hour, of our deaths: this, I think, is sporting with great men, and public spirits, to the scandal of religion, and reproach of power; and if sovereign princes and astrologers must make diversion for the vulgar—why then farewell, say I, to all governments, ecclesiastical and civil. But, I thank my better stars, I am alive to confront this false and audacious predictor, and to make him rue the hour he ever affronted a man of science and resentment. The cardinal may take what measures he pleases with him; as his excellency is a foreigner, and a Papist, he has no reason to rely on me for his justification; I shall only assure the world he is alive:—but as he was bred

to letters and is master of a pen, let him use it in his own defence. In the meantime I shall present the public with a faithful narrative of the ungenerous treatment and hard usage I have received from the virulent papers, and malicious practices, of this pretended astrologer.

A TRUE AND IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, ESQ., AGAINST ME.

The 28th of March, *anno Dom.* 1708, being the night this sham prophet had so impudently fixed for my last, which made little impression on myself; but I cannot answer for my whole family; for my wife, with concern more than usual, prevailed on me to take somewhat to sweat for a cold; and between the hours of eight and nine, to go to bed: the maid, as she was warming my bed, with a curiosity natural to young wenches, runs to the window, and asks of one passing the street, who the bell tolled for? Dr. Partridge, says he, the famous almanack-maker, who died suddenly this evening: the poor girl, provoked, told him he lied like a rascal: the other very sedately replied, the sexton had so informed him, and if false, he was to blame for imposing upon a stranger. She asked a second, and a third, as they passed, and every one was in the same tone. Now, I do not say these are accomplices to a certain astrological 'squire, and that one Bickerstaff might be sauntering thereabout, because I will assert nothing here, but what I dare attest for plain matter of fact. My wife at this fell into a violent disorder, and I must own I was a little discomposed at the oddness of the accident. In the meantime one knocks at my

door; Betty runs down, and opening, finds a sober grave person, who modestly inquires if this was Dr. Partridge's? She, taking him for some cautious city patient, that came at that time for privacy, shows him into the dining-room. As soon as I could compose myself, I went to him, and was surprised to find my gentleman mounted on a table with a two-foot rule in his hand, measuring my walls, and taking the dimensions of the room. Pray, sir, says I, not to interrupt you, have you any business with me?—Only, sir, replies he, order the girl to bring me a better light, for this is but a very dim one.—Sir, says I, my name is Partridge.—O! the doctor's brother, belike, cries he; the staircase, I believe, and these two apartments hung in close mourning, will be sufficient, and only a strip of bays round the other rooms. The doctor must needs die rich, he had great dealings in his way for many years; if he had no family coat, you had as good use the escutcheons of the company, they are as showish, and will look as magnificent, as if he was descended from the blood royal.—With that I assumed a greater air of authority, and demanded who employed him, or how he came there? Why, I was sent, sir, by the company of undertakers, says he, and they were employed by the honest gentleman, who is executor to the good doctor departed; and our rascally porter, I believe, is fallen fast asleep with the black cloth and sconces, or he had been here, and we might have been tacking them up by this time. Sir, says I, pray be advised by a friend, and make the best of your speed out of my doors, for I hear my wife's voice, (which, by the by, is pretty distinguishable,) and in that corner of the room stands a good cudgel, which somebody has felt before now; if that light in her hands, and she know the business you come about, without consult-

ing the stars, I can assure you it will be employed very much to the detriment of your person.—Sir, cries he, bowing with great civility, I perceive extreme grief for the loss of the doctor, disorders you a little at present, but early in the morning I will wait on you with all the necessary materials.—Now, I mention no Bickerstaff; nor do I say, that a certain star-gazing 'squire has been playing my executor before his time; but I leave the world to judge, and he that puts things and things fairly together, will not be much wide of the mark.

Well, once more I got my doors closed, and prepared for bed, in hopes of a little repose after so many ruffling adventures; just as I was putting out my light in order to it, another bounces as hard as he can knock; I open the window, and ask who is there, and what he wants? I am Ned the sexton, replies he, and come to know whether the doctor left any orders for a funeral sermon, and where he is to be laid, and whether his grave is to be plain or bricked?—Why, sirrah, says I, you know me well enough; you know I am not dead, and how dare you affront me after this manner?—Alackaday, sir, replies the fellow, why it is in print, and the whole town knows you are dead; why, there is Mr. White the joiner is but fitting screws to your coffin, he will be here with it in an instant: he was afraid you would have wanted it before this time.—Sirrah, sirrah, says I, you shall know to-morrow, to your cost, that I am alive, and alive like to be.—Why, it is strange, sir, says he, you should make such a secret of your death to us that are your neighbours; it looks as if you had a design to defraud the church of its dues; and, let me tell you, for one that has lived so long by the heavens, that is unhandsomely done.—Hist, hist, says another rogue that stood by him; away, doctor, into your flannel gear as fast as

you can, for here is a whole pack of dismals coming to you with their black equipage, and how indecent will it look for you to stand frightening folks at your window, when you should have been in your coffin these three hours?—In short, what with undertakers, embalmers, joiners, sextons, and your damned elegy hawkers upon a late practitioner in physic and astrology, I got not one wink of sleep the whole night, nor scarce a moment's rest ever since. Now, I doubt not but this villainous 'squire has the impudence to assert, that these are entirely strangers to him; he, good man, knows nothing of the matter, and honest Isaac Bickerstaff, I warrant you, is more a man of honour, than to be an accomplice with a pack of rascals, that walk the streets on nights, and disturb good people in their beds; but he is out, if he thinks the whole world is blind; for there is one John Partridge can smell a knave as far as Grub-street,—although he lies in the most exalted garret, and writes himself 'squire:—but I will keep my temper, and proceed in the narration.

I could not stir out of doors for the space of three months after this, but presently one comes up to me in the street: Mr. Partridge, that coffin you was last buried in, I have not yet been paid for: Doctor, cries another dog, how do you think people can live by making of graves for nothing? next time you die, you may even toll out the bell yourself for Ned. A third rogue tips me by the elbow, and wonders how I have the conscience to sneak abroad without paying my funeral expenses.—Lord, says one, I durst have swore that was honest Dr. Partridge, my old friend; but, poor man, he is gone. —I beg your pardon, says another, you look so like my old acquaintance, that I used to consult on some private occasions: but, alack, he is gone the way of all flesh.—Look, look, look, cries a third, after a

competent space of staring at me, would not one think our neighbour the almanack-maker was crept out of his grave, to take the other peep at the stars in this world, and shew how much he is improved in fortune telling, by having taken a journey to the other?

Nay, the very reader of our parish, a good, sober, discreet person, has sent two or three times for me to come and be buried decently, or send him sufficient reasons to the contrary; or, if I have been interred in any other parish, to produce my certificate, as the act* requires. My poor wife is run almost distracted with being called widow Partridge, when she knows it is false; and once a term she is cited into the court to take out letters of administration. But the greatest grievance is, a paltry quack, that takes up my calling just under my nose, and in his printed directions, with N.B., says he lives in the house of the late ingenious Mr. John Partridge, an eminent practitioner in leather, physic, and astrology.

But to shew how far the wicked spirit of envy, malice, and resentment, can hurry some men, my nameless old persecutor had provided me a monument at the stone-cutter's, and would have erected it in the parish church; and this piece of notorious and expensive villainy had actually succeeded, if I had not used my utmost interest with the vestry, where it was carried at last but by two voices, that I am alive. That stratagem failing, out comes a long sable elegy, bedecked with hour-glasses, mattocks, skulls, spades, and skeletons, with an epitaph as

* The statute of 30 Car. II. for burying in woollen, requires that oath shall be made of the compliance with this act, and a certificate thereof lodged with the minister of the parish, within eight days after interment.

confidently written to abuse me and my profession, as if I had been under ground these twenty years.

And after such barbarous treatment as this, can the world blame me, when I ask, what is become of the freedom of an Englishman? and where is the liberty and property, that my old glorious friend came over to assert? we have drove Popery out of the nation, and sent slavery to foreign climes. The arts only remain in bondage, when a man of science and character shall be openly insulted, in the midst of the many useful services he is daily paying the public. Was it ever heard, even in Turkey or Algiers, that a state astrologer was bantered out of his life by an ignorant impostor, or bawled out of the world by a pack of villainous deep-mouthed hawkers? though I print almanacks, and publish advertisements; though I produce certificates under the minister's and churchwarden's hands that I am alive, and attest the same on oath at quarter-sessions, out comes a full and true relation of the death and interment of John Partridge; truth is bore down, attestations neglected, the testimony of sober persons despised, and a man is looked upon by his neighbours as if he had been seven years dead, and is buried alive in the midst of his friends and acquaintance.

Now, can any man of common sense think it consistent with the honour of my profession, and not much beneath the dignity of a philosopher, to stand bawling before his own door—Alive! alive! ho! the famous Dr. Partridge! no counterfeit, but all alive!——as if I had the twelve celestial monsters of the zodiac to shew within, or was forced for a livelihood to turn retailer to May and Bartholomew fairs? Therefore, if her Majesty would but graciously be pleased to think a hardship of this nature worthy her royal consideration, and the next Parlia-

ment, in their great wisdom, cast but an eye toward the deplorable case of their old philomath, that annually bestows his good wishes on them, I am sure there is one Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., would soon be trussed up for his bloody predictions, and putting good subjects in terror of their lives: and that henceforward to murder a man by way of prophecy, and bury him in a printed letter, either to a lord or commoner, shall as legally entitle him to the present possession of Tyburn, as if he robbed on the highway, or cut your throat in bed.

I shall demonstrate to the judicious that France and Rome are at the bottom of this horrid conspiracy against me; and that culprit aforesaid is a Popish emissary, has paid his visits to St. Germain's, and is now in the measures of Lewis XIV. That, in attempting my reputation, there is a general massacre of learning designed in these realms: and through my sides there is a wound given to all the Protestant almanack-makers in the universe.

VIVAT REGINA.

A

VINDICATION

OF

ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq.

AGAINST

WHAT IS OBJECTED TO HIM BY MR. PARTRIDGE, IN HIS ALMANACK FOR THE PRESENT YEAR, 1709.

By the said ISAAC BICKERSTAFF, Esq.

MR. PARTRIDGE has been lately pleased to treat me after a very rough manner, in that which is called his almanack for the present year: such usage is very indecent from one gentleman to another, and does not at all contribute to the discovery of truth, which ought to be the great end in all disputes of the learned. To call a man a fool and villain, an impudent fellow, only for differing from him in a point merely speculative, is, in my humble opinion, a very improper style for a person of his education. I appeal to the learned world, whether, in my last

year's predictions, I gave him the least provocation for such unworthy treatment. Philosophers have differed in all ages: but the discreetest among them have always differed as became philosophers. Scurrility and passion, in a controversy among scholars, is just so much of nothing to the purpose, and at best a tacit confession of a weak cause: my concern is not so much for my own reputation, as that of the republic of letters, which Mr. Partridge has endeavoured to wound through my sides. If men of public spirit must be superciliously treated for their ingenious attempts, how will true useful knowledge be ever advanced? I wish Mr. Partridge knew the thoughts which foreign universities have conceived of his ungenerous proceedings with me; but I am too tender of his reputation to publish them to the world. That spirit of envy and pride, which blasts so many rising geniuses in our nation, is yet unknown among professors abroad: the necessity of justifying myself will excuse my vanity when I tell the reader, that I have near a hundred honorary letters from several parts of Europe, (some as far as Muscovy,) in praise of my performance. Besides several others, which, as I have been credibly informed, were opened in the post office, and never sent me. It is true, the inquisition in Portugal was pleased to burn my predictions,* and condemn the author and the readers of them: but I hope at the same time, it will be considered, in how deplorable a state learning lies at present in that kingdom: and with the profoundest veneration for crowned heads, I will presume to add, that it a little concerned his Majesty of Portugal to interpose his authority in behalf of a scholar and a gentleman, the subject of a nation with which he is now in so strict

* This is fact.

an alliance. But the other kingdoms and states of Europe have treated me with more candour and generosity. If I had leave to print the Latin letters transmitted to me from foreign parts, they would fill a volume, and be a full defence against all that Mr. Partridge, or his accomplices of the Portugal inquisition, will be ever able to object; who, by the way, are the only enemies my predictions have ever met with at home or abroad. But I hope I know better what is due to the honour of a learned correspondence, in so tender a point. Yet some of those illustrious persons will perhaps excuse me, for transcribing a passage or two in my vindication.* The most learned Monsieur Leibnitz thus addresses to me his third letter:—"*Illustrissimo Bickerstaffio astrologiæ instauratori*," &c. Monsieur Le Clerc, quoting my predictions in a treatise he published last year, is pleased to say, "*Ita nuperrime Bickerstaffius, magnum illud Angliæ sidus.*" Another great professor writing of me, has these words: "*Bickerstaffius, nobilis Anglus, astrologorum hujusce sæculi facile princeps.*" Signior Magliabecchi, the Great Duke's famous library-keeper, spends almost his whole letter in compliments and praises. It is true, the renowned professor of astronomy at Utrecht seems to differ from me in one article; but it is after the modest manner that becomes a philosopher; as, "*pace tanti viri dixerim:*" and, page 55, he seems to lay the error upon the printer, (as indeed it ought,) and says, "*vel forsan error typographi, cum alioquin Bickerstaffius vir doctissimus*, &c.

If Mr. Partridge had followed these examples in the controversy between us, he might have spared

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* The quotations here inserted are in imitation of Dr. Bentley, in some part of the famous controversy between him and Mr. Boyle.

me the trouble of justifying myself in so public a manner. I believe no man is readier to own his errors than I, or more thankful to those who will please to inform him of them. But, it seems, this gentleman, instead of encouraging the progress of his own art, is pleased to look upon all attempts of that kind as an invasion of his province. He has been indeed so wise as to make no objection against the truth of my predictions, except in one single point relating to himself: and to demonstrate how much men are blinded by their own partiality, I do solemnly assure the reader, that he is the only person from whom I ever heard that objection offered, which consideration alone, I think, will take off all its weight.

With my utmost endeavours I have not been able to trace above two objections ever made against the truth of my last year's prophecies: the first was, of a Frenchman, who was pleased to publish to the world, "that the Cardinal de Noailles was still alive, notwithstanding the pretended prophecy of Monsieur Biquerstaffe:" but how far a Frenchman, a Papist, and an enemy, is to be believed in his own cause, against an English Protestant, who is true to the government, I shall leave to the candid and impartial reader.

The other objection is the unhappy occasion of this discourse, and relates to an article in my predictions, which foretold the death of Mr. Partridge to happen on March 29, 1708. This he is pleased to contradict absolutely in the almanack he has published for the present year, and in that ungentlemanly manner (pardon the expression) as I have above related. In that work he very roundly asserts, that he "is not only now alive, but was likewise alive upon that very 29th of March, when I had foretold he should die." This is the subject

of the present controversy between us; which I design to handle with all brevity, perspicuity, and calmness. In this dispute, I am sensible the eyes, not only of England, but of all Europe, will be upon us; and the learned in every country will, I doubt not, take part on that side where they find most appearance of reason and truth.

Without entering into criticisms of chronology about the hour of his death, I shall only prove that Mr. Partridge is not alive. And my first argument is this: about a thousand gentlemen having bought his almanacks for this year, merely to find what he said against me, at every line they read, they would lift up their eyes, and cry out, betwixt rage and laughter, "they were sure no man alive ever writ such damned stuff as this." Neither did I ever hear that opinion disputed; so that Mr. Partridge lies under a dilemma, either of disowning his almanack, or allowing himself to be no man alive. Secondly, Death is defined by all philosophers, a separation of the soul and body. Now it is certain, that the poor woman, who has best reason to know, has gone about for some time to every alley in the neighbourhood, and sworn to the gossips, that her husband had neither life nor soul in him. Therefore, if an uninformed carcase walks still about, and is pleased to call itself Partridge, Mr. Bickerstaff does not think himself anyway answerable for that. Neither had the said carcase any right to beat the poor boy, who happened to pass by it in the street, crying, "A full and true account of Dr. Partridge's death," &c.

Thirdly, Mr. Partridge pretends to tell fortunes, and recover stolen goods; which all the parish says, he must do by conversing with the devil, and other evil spirits: and no wise man will ever allow he could converse personally with either till after he was dead.

Fourthly, I will plainly prove him to be dead, out of his own almanack for this year, and from the very passage which he produces to make us think him alive. He there says, "he is not only now alive, but was also alive upon that very 29th of March, which I foretold he should die on:" by this, he declares his opinion, that a man may be alive now who was not alive a twelvemonth ago. And, indeed, there lies the sophistry of his argument. He dares not assert he was alive ever since that 29th of March, but that he "is now alive, and was so on that day:" I grant the latter; for he did not die till night, as appears by the printed account of his death, in a letter to a lord; and whether he be since revived, I leave the world to judge. This indeed is perfect cavilling, and I am ashamed to dwell any longer upon it.

Fifthly, I will appeal to Mr. Partridge himself, whether it be probable I could have been so indiscreet, to begin my predictions with the only falsehood that ever was pretended to be in them? and this in an affair at home, where I had so many opportunities to be exact; and must have given such advantages against me to a person of Mr. Partridge's wit and learning, who, if he could possibly have raised one single objection more against the truth of my prophecies, would hardly have spared me.

And here I must take occasion to reprove the above-mentioned writer of the relation of Mr. Partridge's death, in a letter to a lord; who was pleased to tax me with a mistake of four whole hours in my calculation of that event. I must confess, this censure, pronounced with an air of certainty, in a matter that so nearly concerned me, and by a grave, judicious author, moved me not a little. But though I was at that time out of town, yet several of my friends, whose curiosity had led them to be

exactly informed, (for as to my own part, having no doubt at all in the matter, I never once thought of it,) assured me, I computed to something under half an hour; which (I speak my private opinion) is an error of no very great magnitude, that men should raise a clamour about it. I shall only say, it would not be amiss, if that author would henceforth be more tender of other men's reputation, as well as his own. It is well there were no more mistakes of that kind; if there had, I presume he would have told me of them with as little ceremony.

There is one objection against Mr. Partridge's death, which I have sometimes met with, though, indeed, very slightly offered, that he still continues to write almanacks. But this is no more than what is common to all of that profession. Gadbury, Poor Robin, Dove, Wing, and several others, do yearly publish their almanacks, though several of them have been dead since before the Revolution. Now, the natural reason of this I take to be, that, whereas it is the privilege of authors to live after their death, almanack-makers are alone excluded; because their dissertations, treating only upon the minutes as they pass, become useless as those go off. In consideration of which, Time, whose registers they are, gives them a lease in reversion, to continue their works after death.

I should not have given the public, or myself, the trouble of this vindication, if my name had not been made use of by several persons to whom I never lent it; one of which, a few days ago, was pleased to father on me a new set of predictions. But I think these are things too serious to be trifled with. It grieved me to the heart, when I saw my labours, which had cost me so much thought and watching, bawled about by the common hawkers of Grub-street, which I only intended for the weighty

consideration of the gravest persons. This prejudiced the world so much at first, that several of my friends had the assurance to ask me whether I were in jest? to which I only answered coldly, "that the event would shew." But it is the talent of our age and nation, to turn things of the greatest importance into ridicule. When the end of the year had verified all my predictions, out comes Mr. Partridge's almanack, disputing the point of his death; so that I am employed, like the general who was forced to kill his enemies twice over, whom a necromancer had raised to life. If Mr. Partridge have practised the same experiment upon himself, and be again alive, long may he continue so: that does not the least contradict my veracity: but I think I have clearly proved, by invincible demonstration, that he died, at farthest, within half an hour of the time I foretold, and not four hours sooner, as the above-mentioned author, in his letter to a lord, has maliciously suggested, with a design to blast my credit, by charging me with so gross a mistake.

A

FAMOUS PREDICTION

OF

MERLIN,

THE BRITISH WIZARD.

WRITTEN ABOVE A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, AND RELATING TO THE YEAR 1709.

WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES,

By T. N. PHILOMATH.

LAST year was published a paper of Predictions, pretended to be written by one Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., but the true design of it was to ridicule the art of astrology, and expose its professors as ignorant or impostors. Against this imputation Dr. Partridge has learnedly vindicated himself in his almanack for that year.

For a farther vindication of this famous art, I have thought fit to present the world with the

following prophecy. The original is said to be of the famous Merlin, who lived about a thousand years ago; and the following translation is two hundred years old, for it seems to be written near the end of Henry the Seventh's reign. I found it in an old edition of Merlin's prophecies, imprinted at London by Johan Haukyns, in the year 1530, page 39. I set it down word for word in the old orthography, and shall take leave to subjoin a few explanatory notes.

Seven and Ten addyd to nine,
Of Fraunce her Woe this is the Sygne,
Tamys Ribere twys y-frozen,
Walke sans wetyng Shoes ne Hozen.
Then compth foorthe, Ich understonde,
From Towne of Stoffe to fattyn Londe,
An herdie Chyftan, Woe the Worne
To Fraunce, that ever he was born.
Then shall the Fyshe beweyle his Bosse;
Nor shall grin Berrys make up the Losse.
Yonge Symnele shall again miscarrye:
And Norways Pryd again shall marry.
And from the Tree where Blossums feele,
Ripe Fruit shall come, and all is wele,
Reaums shall daunce Honde in Honde,
And it shall be merrye in old Inglonde,
Then old Inglonde shall be no more,
And no man shall be sorrie therefore.
Geryon shall have three Hedes agayne,
Till Hapsburge makyth them but twayne.